PHILOSOPHICAL AND CRITICAL

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

NATURE, CHARACTERS,

AND

VARIOUS SPECIES

OF

COMPOSITION.

By JOHN OGILVIE, D.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

Η πως αν αλλως συεστη τοδε ΤΟ ΠΑΝ, ει μη ΡΥΘΜΩ τινι και ΤΑΞΕΙ διεκεκοσμητο. Και τα υφ' ημων κατασκευαζομενα οργανα ΜΕΤΡΩ ΠΑΝΤΑ γιγνονται. Ει δε ΠΑΝΤΑ αλλα, πολλω γε μαλλον Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ, ατε και ΠΕΡΙΕΚΤΙΚΟΣ ΑΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΩΝ.

ΛΟΝΓΙΝ. ΑΠΟΣΠΑΣ.

Of all the arts in which mankind excel,
Nature's chief master-piece is WRITING WELL.

BUCKINGHAM.

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IN the moſt flouriſhing ages of Greece and Rome, the various branches of the ſubject of this Eſſay employed the pens of authors, whoſe works every ſucceeding age has contemplated with admiration. In the preſent enlightened æra, to whatever frivolous objects the public taſte may have been ſometimes directed, the author cannot ſuppoſe that ſuch a ſubject can fail of being in itſelf univerſally agreeable, as it naturally draws the attention as well of thoſe who occupy the different departments of the Art, *as of the reader who hath peruſed their writings with emolument or pleaſure.—With regard to the execution in the preſent inſtance, every reader will judge for himſelf. The author will neither attempt to raiſe his eſteem of it, by enlarging on the approbation with which it has been honoured by ſome reſpectable critics; nor to repreſs juſt cenſure by mean acknowledgments of timidity. He will take the liberty only to obſerve, that though the works of the moſt eminent ancient and modern wri-*

ters on the ſubject of Compoſition have been conſulted, and are often referred to in the preſent, yet far from following their track with ſervility, he has, upon ſome occaſions, differed from them in opinion, and has even expoſed their blemiſhes with freedom. This conduct will diſpleaſe no reader who obſerves that it was neceſſary to give examples of the faults, as well as of the beauties of Compoſition; and that both are moſt clearly diſcerned, when contraſted properly with each other. Opinions which he judged exceptionable, he will likewiſe be excuſed for having attempted to refute, by thoſe who acquit him of the only charges that render this conduct inexcuſable—petulance, or malignity. Where the writers whom he conſulted either ſuggeſted to his mind a certain train of obſervation, or ſerved to confirm and illuſtrate ſuch as occurred to him, he has never failed either to quote the paſſage from their works, or to throw it into the notes; which laſt, in a work of this kind, have been rendered unavoidably numerous and protracted. That this coincidence of ſentiment did not occur more frequently, the author can only aſcribe to the extenſive view which he was led to take of his ſubject. His tract in the firſt part of the work (in which the intellectual powers

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are considered as influencing Composition) he was left to chalk out for himself *. *The lights thrown upon the other branches of it, particularly by the ancient critics, are stronger, and more diversified. He has therefore endeavoured at the same time to confirm his own observations by a variety of examples drawn from their writings, (the most striking of which are made intelligible to the* English *reader), and to relax the mind from rigid disquisition, by placing before it some capital strokes of the most consummate masters of the art. There is still another, and an important branch of the subject that remains to be treated; in which it is proposed to consider this* divine *Art as a principal means of promoting the civilization and the happiness of mankind. This view of it is necessary to complete the Author's original plan; though the* critical *part is fully comprised in what is now offered to the public. In so large a compass as is here taken, and on themes in canvassing which* freedom of thought *is not subjected to censure, there must be a corresponding variety of opinions. The writer does not form so idle an expectation, as that every reader will think in the*

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* See the two first Notes of Sect. I.

same

ſame manner as himſelf on each of theſe ſubjects. To the queſtion therefore,—"By what ſtandard would you have your performance to be tried?"—he replies,—Let the ſame degree of candour and impartiality *be employed in judging of the merit or defects of the following obſervations, which the author himſelf has applied to thoſe of every author, ancient or modern, which in the proſecution of this attempt he hath had occaſion to inveſtigate.*

N. B. The reader will obſerve that the terms Underſtanding, Judgment, Reaſon, are uſed to ſignify the ſame intellectual power, though the firſt of theſe, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is of larger import. This liberty the author took in order to avoid repetitions.

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The following ERRORS were occaſioned by the AUTHOR's diſtance from the Preſs.

Page 29. line 6. of the note, *for* throw *read* thrown. P. 133. l. 7. *for* conſtux *read* conflict. P. 149. l. 24 of the note, *for* in *read* of. P. 176. l. 11. *for* abſtains *read* obtains. P. 202. l. 24. *read* in the art, &c. P. 209. l. 22. *for* a while *read* and while. P. 230. l. 8. of the note, *for* in concluding *read* to conclude. P. 238. l. 21. *place the* (;) *after the word* whatever. P. 247. l. 6. of the note, *for* Cinzas *read* Cineas. P. 271. l. 9. *for* or *read* for. l. 10. *for* mild *read* wild. P. 317. l. 3. of the note, *dele* the. P. 368. l. 12, 13. *for* perſpicacity *read* perſpicuity. P. 412. l. 9. *after* venture *add* to propoſe.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND CRITICAL

OBSERVATIONS

ON

COMPOSITION.

BOOK I.

Of Compoſition as it regards the Faculties of the Mind.

SECTION I.

Introductory Obſervations on the Nature of Compoſition.

COMPOSITION will probably be contemplated by a mind that reflects on its nature, importance, and tendency, in the two following general lights. It will be conſidered in one view as the reſult of a peculiar combination, and propenſity of the faculties of the mind: in another, as *an art*, diſtinguiſhed by par-

ticular characters, divided into various ſpecies; and producing effects of the greateſt importance to the civilization and happineſs of mankind. It is propoſed, in the preſent Eſſay, to examine this copious ſubject under theſe general heads: in the proſecution of which, after having endeavoured to point out the ſpheres of the intellectual powers in this art, to mark the ſignatures by which each is diſcriminated; to diſplay their diverſified combinations, and to lay down ſuch rules as tend to bring theſe moſt nearly to an equipoiſe, when found to have been originally diſproportioned; we propoſe to conſider, in ſeparate ſections, the principal characters of claſſical compoſition; to take a view of its various ſpecies, as formed by the union of theſe characters; and to conclude the work by making ſome obſervations on the deſign, importance, and tendency of the art.

As it will be obvious to any perſon who hath read on this ſubject, that we muſt here underſtand the term Compoſition (thus comprehenſively viewed) in a larger ſenſe than hath formerly been aſſigned to

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it *, we ſhall make a few remarks, in the preſent ſection, on the powers that occupy its

* Our meaning will be greatly miſtaken, if it is ſuppoſed that any general cenſure is implied here on the authors who have examined this ſubject; as if their views of it had been contracted and defective. Far otherwiſe. By ſaying that the term Compoſition is taken in this Eſſay in a larger ſenſe, or includes a greater variety of parts than theſe aſſign to it, we intend only to point out the difference betwixt a general definition, including every branch of a comprehenſive art; and one adapted more immediately to ſome detached field, or department of it. The philoſophical critic, it is obvious, may take a view of the preſent theme ſufficiently adequate as far as this ſcience is concerned, though propriety will require that it ſhould extend to nothing beyond it. The ſame remark may be applied to poetry, eloquence, hiſtory, conſidered as ſpecies of one comprehenſive art. In each it is obvious that the definition of this term, when applied to any of theſe ſeparately, muſt neceſſarily include fewer objects, and take in a much leſs compaſs upon the whole, than when it is viewed as relating to all. It happens indeed frequently, that in conſequence of that natural propenſity, which every writer feels to place his own ſubject in as important a light as poſſible, and to make it comprehend the moſt various aſſemblage, accounts of theſe are pompouſly given, which diſpaſſionate reaſon may reject as exaggerated. In this manner the different provinces of this art, inſtead of being properly diſcriminated, are promiſcuouſly blended together,

its various departments; as neceſſary to place before the mind a full and appropriated idea of the ſubject *.

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and the mind, after having conſidered what different writers have advanced on each, finds itſelf wholly at a loſs to determine its bounds with preciſion. It is this circumſtance principally which renders it a matter of ſo much difficulty to ſelect, in treating particular ſubjects, the compoſition that it is beſt adapted to its nature. Hence the philoſopher, either aſſuming too often the dreſs of the orator, or laying it aſide altogether, in a ſphere where he meets with models of each kind, is in hazard, according to the particular biaſs of his mind, of making too much, or too little uſe of the ornaments of diſcourſe, by which means his expreſſion is rendered either florid, or enervated and unintereſting. The obſervation hath equal force when applied to the other branches abovementioned. A general view of the art, in which we conſider not only what conſtitutes the perfection of each character contemplated by itſelf, but in what manner the concurrence of all ought to diſtinguiſh its various ſpecies, muſt ſupply theſe defects if properly executed. The compariſon of theſe laſt with each other likewiſe, will naturally produce a clearer and more particular notion of what is juſt and appropriated in each, than can be obtained by eſtimates formed from the writings of different authors, whoſe views have regarded ſingle parts; and whoſe manner of treating them varies, according to their diverſity of taſte and diſpoſition.

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The faculties of the mind, whoſe offices in the province of compoſition we propoſe to

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That the ancients in general, who have examined the ſeveral branches of compoſition with great accuracy, lay down the beſt rules, and exhibit the nobleſt models for imitation in every department, will be called in queſtion by no man who is converſant with their works. Many modern performances both abound with precepts, and diſplay examples that are equally admirable. It is a conſiderable part of our buſineſs in the following work to confirm this truth, partly by a critical examination of ſuch obſervations, particularly of the former, as relate moſt immediately to the preſent ſubject, carried on with the utmoſt impartiality; and partly by illuſtrations of the characters by which the art is diſtinguiſhed, drawn from the moſt eminent performances, both ancient and modern. The author intends only from the remarks made in this note to ſuggeſt a plea in his own vindication, to thoſe who may cenſure him for having made choice of a theme that hath employed the pens of ſo many illuſtrious writers; and an excuſe for his differing in opinion ſo often from ſome of them. The relation in which he was led to conſider one part as ſtanding to another, makes him aſſign a narrower precinct to it, than would probably have been the caſe, had he conſidered each of theſe apart. This the reader will keep uniformly in his eye.

* We propoſe here to lay before the reader ſome of

to conſider ſeparately, and even if poſſible to determine with ſome preciſion, are the underſtanding,

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the various meanings that have been given to the word Compoſition by authors of the greateſt eminence, in order to confirm an obſervation made in the preceding note. Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, in his excellent treatiſe ΠΕΡΙ ΣΥΝΘΕΣΕΩΣ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΩΝ, enters upon his ſubject by explaining the ſenſe of this term, which he conſiders in two different lights. His firſt definition is general, relating to the common acceptation of the phraſe. Η ΣΥΝΘΕΣΙΣ *εϛιν, ωσπερ και αυτο δηλοι ονομα,* ΠΟΙΑ ΤΙΣ ΘΕΣΙΣ ΠΑΡ' ΑΛΛΗΛΑ ΤΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΛΟΓΟΥ ΜΟΡΙΩΝ ΣΥΓΓΡΑΜ: Tom. 2. p. 2. edit. Lipſic. This account of the art, in which the whole weight lies upon a due diſtribution or order of parts, includes unqueſtionably one principal province of compoſition. But conſidered as a definition of the ſubject taken in one comprehenſive view, it is defective, as we receive from it no idea of the propriety and harmony of modulated language correſponding to the ſentiment of a work, or of beauty ariſing from happy illuſtration. Theſe points, however, are fully included in his next definition, which relates to his own ſubject, and is much more particular. *Εϛι δε της* ΣΥΝΘΕΣΕΩΣ ΕΡΓΑ *οικειως θειναι τατε* Ονοματα *παρ' αλληλα, και τοις κωλοις αποδουναι την προσηκουσαν* ΑΡΜΟΝΙΑΝ *και* ΤΑΙΣ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΟΙΣ *διαλαβειν αυτον ολον του Λογον.* ibid. Theſe definitions of the term ΣΥΝΘΕΣΙΣ, exhibit an idea of it, only incomplete as they

derſtanding, the imagination, or inventive power; diſcernment, as indicating the operation

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they regard not its connection with a certain union of intellectual powers, an omiſſion for which our author is no way culpable, becauſe this view of the art falls not in with his ſubject. Another ancient Critic, who appears to have taken a pretty full view of compoſition, defines it very particularly. Απας τοινυν ΛΟΓΟΣ εννοιαν την εχει, και μεθοδον περι την εννοιαν, και ΛΕΞΙΝ, η τυτοις ηφρμοσαι· Της δε αυ Λεξεως εχουσης ωαντως τινα, και αυτης ιδιωματα, Παλιν αυτε σχηματα τε εσι τινα και κωλα ΣΥΖΘΕΣΕΙΣ τε, και ΑΝΑΠΑΥΣΕΙΣ και το εξ αμφοιν τυτοιν συνισαμενον Ο ΡΥΘΜΟΣ. ΕΡΜΟΓΕΝ: περι ΙΔΕΩΝ. βιβ. Α. Κεφ. β'. The critic it is true hath a regard in this account, principally to eloquence, or the art of perſuaſion. But the definition is full, and appropriated as far as the ſubject required it to be ſo. Its defect, as a complete view of compoſition, is the ſame as in the former inſtance, and for the reaſon formerly aſſigned. The great ancient Critic has treated of ſeveral different branches of compoſition in many parts of his writings. In his firſt book on rhetoric, particularly, he aſſigns a diſtinct chapter to each diſtinguiſhed character of this art. But his ſentiments of the ſubject in general we muſt collect from different parts of his works. Thus he obſerves, that by a juſt arrangement of parts we acquire clear ideas of objects that are at firſt obſcurely known to us, ΦΥΣΙΚ: βιβ. Α. κεφ. α'. and infers the neceſſity of

ration of both; and memory, whoſe uſe we ſhall endeavour particularly to ſpecify. The

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mentioning the members of which a ſubject conſiſts particularly and fully, in order to render it thoroughly intelligible and uſeful, ibid. He conſiders the rhetorical art under three general diviſions, which comprehend different ſpecies of compoſition, the philoſophical in particular. Theſe are the ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΕΥΤΙΚΟΝ, ΔΙΚΑΝΙΚΟΝ, and ΕΠΙΔΕΙΚΤΙΚΟΝ. ΡΗΤΟΡΙΚ. βιϐ. Α. κεφ. γ'. Laſtly he points out with great preciſion, the method of laying down an accurate diſpoſition, id. βιϐ. Γ. κεφ. ιγ'. and ΜΕΤΑΦΥΣ. βιϐ. Γ. κεφ. ι'. But as he treats not ſyſtematically of the ſubject of this eſſay as a general term including many ſubdiviſions, a definition of it regarding its origin, and comprehending its various branches fell not in with his deſigns. Longinus, whoſe ſphere is much more contracted than that of our great philoſopher, takes notice of a ΣΥΓΚΛΕΙΟΥΣΑ ΣΥΝΘΕΣΙΣ, as the laſt ingredient of the ſublime, and neceſſary to connect the other four ſources which he had previouſly enumerated, into one body. ΠΕΡΙ ΥΨΟΣ τμημ. η'. and αθ'. But as this regards only a particular character of it, which will be examined in its place, we have but juſt mentioned it here. Of Roman writers who have treated of the preſent ſubject, the judicious and elegant Quintilian is by far the moſt copious and particular. In his well-known work, intitled Inſtitutiones Oratoriæ, (of which the reader will find much uſe made in the

The three firſt mentioned of theſe, though employed in ſpheres that are diſtinct from each

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the following eſſay, and whoſe excellence is equal to almoſt any eulogium) the preſent ſubject is diſcuſſed by itſelf. The fourth ſection of his ninth book contains his obſervations on it. Here he conſiders three things as conſtituting juſt compoſition, order, or a due arrangement of parts; connection, (junctura) or a juſt correſpondence of the members of a ſentence, as well as of words to each other; and harmony, (numerus) or the graceful and melodious ſtructure of periods. We ſhall have occaſion afterwards to examine what he hath advanced on theſe heads. At preſent we need only obſerve, that his view of compoſition, as an art, principally regards expreſſion, which is the leaſt part of it; and even here likewiſe he hath a particular regard, as we might naturally expect, to eloquence, which is his ſubject. It would be an endleſs taſk to ſelect from the writings of the illuſtrious Roman orator and philoſopher, the different views that are preſented to us of compoſition. There is neither a character nor ſpecies of it which he hath omitted to examine at one time or other in his works. It is only to be regretted that his obſervations on this ſubject lie detached, inſtead of being placed together in one view, as they thus loſe a great part of their effect. In conſequence likewiſe of treating the ſubject in this manner, its connection with the faculties of the mind (which forms a firſt and principal object in our eſtimation, when we ſurvey it as a proportioned whole) falls not particularly under obſervation.

each other, yet are required to exert united influence in every ſpecies of this art, when properly conducted. Of this we ſhall judge with more preciſion from a general conſideration of their different offices.

" The underſtanding is that power of the mind which determines the relation of parts to each other in laying down the plan of a performance of whatever nature; which judgeth of its comprehenſion as ſuited to the ſubject; which, following the

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ſervation. In his firſt book De Oratore, and twelfth chapter, he gives a definition of the term with conſiderable extent, diſtinguiſheth betwixt the expreſſion and ſentiment; and ſeparates with great propriety and diſcernment the provinces of philoſophy and eloquence from each other. Thus much for the ſentiments of the Ancients on the meaning of this term. We would ſwell out this note to too much length by conſidering the accounts of it given by modern writers, which differ in nothing materially from the preceding ones, at leaſt as far as the author can judge from his acquaintance with their works. The opinions of ſome of the moſt eminent on this ſubject we ſhall have occaſion to adduce, and to examine likewiſe at large in different ſections of the following eſſay.

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ſeries of effects to their original, inveſtigates a cauſe; and ſuperintends the conduct of this procedure in ſuch a manner as to make the expreſſion bear the ſame relation to the ſentiments of any performance which theſe laſt are required to do to each other." —"Imagination, or the inventive faculty, as it is denominated, is that which ſtrikes out happy imitations, forms new and original aſſemblages of ideas; and thus ſupplies the materials of thoſe juſt and beautiful illuſtrations, which at the ſame time improve the expreſſion of compoſition, and heighten the effect of its ſentiment." — "By diſcernment we underſtand that faculty which, without carrying on any regular proceſs, comprehends as it were inſtantaneouſly the proper manner of treating any ſubject, by fixing upon the points that are of principal conſequence, and accompliſheth by this mean, at once, purpoſes which the underſtanding alone *cannot* effectuate in *ſome caſes* by any exertion; and obtains in thoſe to which it is adapted, by a ſlow and deliberate procedure." This power appears to participate of both the former, but

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is conſtituted wholly by neither. From judgment, conſidered by itſelf, it differs remarkably in quickneſs of perception at all times univerſally, and even upon ſome occaſions, in its choice of objects. From imagination it is no leſs diſtinguiſhed by making *a juſt* inſtead of a *ſuperficial* or *indiſcriminate ſelection of means*; and by going to the bottom of a ſubject, inſtead of ſkimming lightly on its ſurface. Diſcernment, thus including a part of the offices both of judgment and imagination, we ſhall find to act in different departments, according to the proportion in which either of theſe faculties is conferred on an individual. Thus when a large ſhare of the inventive is united with a much greater proportion of the reaſoning power, to which laſt therefore it is wholly ſubſervient, the intellectual eye, though taking cognizance in general of all objects, will be conſpicuous principally, either in conducting, or in judging of that diſquiſition which is directed by the underſtanding. It judgeth for inſtance in this caſe of the force and propriety of an argument, whoſe connection

nection with the ſubject might wholly eſcape the obſervation of a leſs intelligent mind. It brings together proofs from every quarter, to ſupport and confirm an hypotheſis framed originally by an act that indicates the moſt acute perception; and hits (to uſe the language of an eminent writer) upon that *particular point* on which the *bent* of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends *." Thus it is, that philoſophical diſcernment is peculiarly conſtituted, and becomes conſpicuous, either in the ſphere of compoſition, when a ſubject is methodiſed and diſcuſſed,

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* Pope's preface to Shakeſpeare. Our author aſcribes this conduct of the great Genius whom he characteriſeth, to a talent different from that of judgment; ſomething he ſays, "*very peculiar*, and *betwixt penetration and felicity*." I do not underſtand the meaning of theſe laſt words very clearly. Shakeſpeare poſſeſſed in an eminent degree the diſcernment that ariſeth from judgment and imagination acting in vigorous concurrence, and it is one of the criteria of this power (as we ſhall ſhow particularly in its proper place) to produce this happy but uncommon effect, which could not eſcape the obſervation of a writer who himſelf poſſeſſed ſo large a proportion of intellectual acumen.

or in forming an eſtimate of the execution when ſubmitted to critical inveſtigation.

A proportion of the inventive faculty more adequate to that of the reaſoning power, (each ſuppoſed to exiſt in an eminent degree) renders the influence of diſcernment ſtill more conſpicuous than in the former inſtance, becauſe it appears with *equal* advantage in this caſe, when judging of the *arts*, as well as of the inveſtigations of ſcience; and will pronounce as properly of what is *beautiful* in the one, as of what is *juſt* and deciſive in the other. The means by which both is effectuated we ſhall conſider more particularly, when we come to treat of this as a *diſtinct* faculty, operating univerſally on the various branches of compoſition.

We have in the preceding obſervations conſidered the intellectual powers only as influencing the various ſpecies of the ſubject of this eſſay.—But there are two queſtions ariſing from our account of theſe which muſt be anſwered before we acquire a clear idea of *compoſition as it regards the faculties of the mind.* Is (it may be aſked) the

the concurrence of thoſe we have enumerated neceſſary to give maſtery to an author's execution in any department of this comprehenſive art?—We may reply without heſitation, that though the degrees in which this union may take place vary according to the nature of a ſubject, yet the combination in ſome degree *is* neceſſary for this purpoſe. But ſhould it again be aſked, whether a talent for any ſpecies of compoſition, or a power of placing thoughts in the happieſt diſpoſition, and of expreſſing them in the fitteſt words; whether this talent always accompanies the union of intellectual qualities abovementioned, even when ſubſiſting in a high degree; we ſhall find upon enquiry, that there is no neceſſary connection betwixt theſe, as the former may ſubſiſt, when there is no peculiar bias to the latter.

1. It is uſually thought that wherever a vigorous imagination exerts its influence, the mind commonly receives a propenſity to compoſition; and that the higheſt walks of this art are *always* occupied by thoſe who poſſeſs an eminent proportion of it.

Authors

Authors in general have not contradicted the prevailing opinion with regard to the connection betwixt this mental quality and the ſubject of which we treat. But a little reflection will ſhow us that we are miſtaken in this eſtimation.

Upon ſurveying attentively the mental powers by which man is diſtinguiſhed from the inferior creation, we ſhall find each of theſe aſſuming forms ſo various as it operates on particular characters, that, without beſtowing cloſe attention, we may overlook the cauſe from which effects ſeemingly ſo remote from each other derive their origin. Thus a mechanical engine, an animated figure in hiſtory painting, a philoſophical theory, and a ſeries of intereſting and well concerted incidents, appear at firſt view to be objects whoſe connection is ſo diſtant, that it demands attention to diſcover that the inventive faculty, aſſuming different aſpects, is the common parent of all. The difficulty of tracing to their original ſource the phænomena that ariſe from imagination, is ſtill greater, when we conſider its influence on the

actions

actions of men. Thus among the active part of mankind, who are commonly ſuppoſed to poſſeſs no great ſhare of this faculty, becauſe perhaps they are incapable either of diſcovering, or of feeling the beauties of compoſition; we are apt to overlook or not to aſſign to its proper cauſe, the facility with which theſe men invent plans of happineſs adapted to their diſpoſitions, one after a former hath been diſappointed; the uncommon expedients they ſometimes adopt to carry theſe into execution; in ſhort, their capacity of finding ſuch remote and extraordinary reſources as render the moſt formidable dangers not only ſurmountable, but even familiar: yet it is unqueſtionably the ſame power receiving only a different direction, which produceth theſe effects in life as it is that in the ſpheres of poetry and eloquence invents the fable, or ſupplies the illuſtrations.

It is not however only from the actions of men that we may be led to conſider the buſy part of them as poſſeſſing in many inſtances no inconſiderable ſhare of imagination. A little acquaintance with life

will ſet before us another claſs upon whoſe *converſation* this faculty appears to operate in a very ſtriking manner, though without extending any further. Theſe are men who inheriting from nature a certain quickneſs and volatility of thought, which evaporates in an inſtant, are qualified to ſparkle a moment in the circle of their companions. But the talent of methodiſing ſentiment, and that of throwing out looſe thoughts, however entertaining, are wholly different. The firſt is the offspring of fancy deriving little aſſiſtance from the reaſoning power; whereas the laſt is effectuated by an effort indicating mature and deliberate recollection. Thus it happens that men wholly diſqualified for the one of theſe employments, aſſume the other as a province in which nature hath fully compenſated the defect.

As imagination itſelf is thus ſuſceptible of ſuch different appearances, ſo the underſtanding, conſiſtent and uniform as its operations uſually are, participates likewiſe, in conſequence of its union with the former, of this variety of character. Thus

judgment

judgment united with that invention which carries a man through the buſy ſcenes of life, derives from this power an expreſſion ſo different from that which diſtinguiſheth it in compoſition, as not to be marked without cloſe attention from its effects *. Its employments are indeed ſo diſtinct from each other in theſe caſes, that the ſame intellectual faculty which judgeth of the moſt effectual expedients in the various occurrences of life; weighing the force of an argument, or eſtimating the propriety of an illuſtration, appears in aſpects ſeemingly incongruous, and is ſeldom or never

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* Thus one of the greateſt maſters of reaſon aſſigns to this faculty two diſtinct offices, that of laying down plans of action; and that of contemplating abſtracted ideas with ſteadineſs and comprehenſion. Και τυτο φανερον ομοιως ευ τε τοις κατα ΤΕΧΝΗΝ, και τοις κατα ΦΥΣΙΝ. βελτιον δε το λογον εχον διηρηται τε διχη καθ' ονπερ ειωθαμεν τροπον διαιρειν. Ο μεν ραρ ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΟΣ εϛι λογος, ο δε ΘΕΩΡΗΤΙΚΟΣ. Ωσαυτως ουν αναγκη, &c. ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. ΠΟΛΙΤ. Η. With the ſame latitude another ancient philoſopher conſiders this faculty as ΕΝΝΟΙΑ ΦΥΣΙΚΗ ΤΩΝ ΚΑΘΟΛΟΥ. ΧΡΥΣΙΠ. apud ΔΙΟΓΕΝ. ΛΑΕΡΤ. ΖΕΝ. βιϐ. ζ'.

able to act in both capacities with an equal degree of accuracy *.

That mental power which when exerted either in executing, or in judging of execution in the fields of compoſition takes the deſignation of diſcernment; in common life is known by that of *ſagacity*. In the laſt it is diſtinguiſhed by a perception of the real character, and an *inſight* (if we may thus term it) into the ſecret motives that influence conduct, no leſs juſtly than inſtantaneouſly conceived, from circumſtances that eſcape a common obſerver. Its effect in the firſt inſtance we

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* It is probably on account of this inability that we find thoſe who poſſeſſed the greateſt ſhare of reaſon, ſo pathetically lamenting its weakneſs. I mention here a paſſage of Cicero preſerved by St. Auſtin not only on account of its analogy to the preſent ſubject; but as it is expreſſed with peculiar elegance and propriety. "Homo (ſays he) non ut a *Matre*, ſed ut a *Noverca Natura* editus eſt in vitam, corpore nudo, fragili, & infirmo: animo autem anxio ad moleſtias, humili ad timores, molli ad labores, prono ad libidines: in quo tamen ineſſet tanquam OBRUTUS quidam DIVINUS IGNIS INGENII & MENTIS. Patricii Fragment. Cicer.

have

have formerly pointed out. Perhaps it may be ſaid with truth, that the ſame qualities which form a penetrating judge of compoſition, would form likewiſe the *ſagacious* obſerver of manners and action, and always does ſo when accompanied with experience. But whatever truth may be in this, the reverſe ſurely does not hold, that he who is acknowledged to ſhow *ſagacity* in the one caſe, poſſeſſeth always *diſcernment* in the other. This is ſo evident as to ſtand in need of no confirmation.

From theſe obſervations on the human mind it will follow, that the talent abovementioned of placing thoughts in the happieſt order, and of clothing them in the fitteſt words, accompanies not neceſſarily the poſſeſſion of the higheſt intellectual qualities whether acting ſeparately or in union with each other. Imagination we have ſeen diſtinguiſheth the *mechanic* as well as the *poet*, and judgment is ſhared in common by the philoſopher and the man of buſineſs. Both faculties indeed we have ſeen to be combined in this laſt inſtance; and yet the perſon diſtinguiſhed by their

combination, not only unable to acquire excellence in, but even to conceive ideas of maſterly compoſition.—To reply to theſe facts, that excellence in the art of which we treat, depends not upon the poſſeſſion of the principal powers, but upon the degrees in which they ſubſiſt, will be found upon examination to be diſſatisfactory. Admitting the truth of this aſſertion it can anſwer no purpoſe, unleſs we mean to affirm that the ſhare of reaſon and imagination required to conſtitute a talent for compoſition, is *neceſſarily* and *eſſentially* ſuperior to that portion of theſe which forms an ingenious mechanic, or a man of abilities in the tranſactions of life. This, however, reflection will lead us to reject as contrary in many inſtances to the dictates both of reaſon and experience.

The firſt inventor of any complicated piece of machinery, (a clock, or a watch, for inſtance) in whoſe conſtruction many inferior and regulated movements concur to accompliſh the deſign of the artiſt, muſt be conſidered as having received from nature in an high degree not only the faculty

of

of invention, but that likewiſe which judgeth with acuteneſs and penetration. The extent of the former appears from his conception of ſo original a work; the depth and ſubtlety of the latter, from an exquiſitely nice arrangement of parts, and the mutual dependence ſubſiſting through the whole. In the ſame manner, the man who is intereſted in the buſineſs of life, and is able to make various and remote expedients terminate in the accompliſhment of ſome purpoſe of importance, cannot upon many occaſions be denied his claim to a very uncommon ſhare of both theſe qualities without injuſtice; the one being remarkably conſpicuous in the invention of ſuch expedients; the other in their application to particular purpoſes. Thus, will it be denied that a general entruſted with ſupreme authority, whoſe mind is fruitful of reſources, and who by the happy means that occur to him, extricates himſelf with honour when placed in the moſt critical and perilous circumſtances; will it be denied that ſuch a man diſplays conſummate genius, i. e. (ſuppoſing this character to de-

pend principally upon imagination) great *invention* in the military art?—Admitting this to be true, muſt we not allow him likewiſe to diſcover diſcernment in the trueſt ſenſe of that word, when we obſerve that he hath foreſeen and ſuperſeded the deſigns of his rival, that his ſtratagems have not only diſplayed imagination in their contrivance, but the greateſt addreſs in being carried into execution? Can we in the laſt place deny his claim to extenſive underſtanding, when we find that his whole conduct hath in general been regulated by thoſe maxims that moſt commonly influence the diſcreet and the prudent*?

Should

* The reader who would ſee theſe obſervations exemplified, will find a variety of inſtances to his purpoſe in peruſing the hiſtory of Sertorius oppoſed alternately to the beſt Roman generals; in the detail of Hannibal's exploits while he maintained himſelf in Italy; in the conduct of Cæſar, (who wrote indeed almoſt as well as he fought) particularly after the battle of Dyrrachium. In more modern times he will meet with wonderful proofs of this military genius carried to its utmoſt extent in the hiſtory of Condé and Turenne, when oppoſed to each other; in the laſt campaign of the latter when

Should it again be replied, that however extenſive we may allow imagination ſometimes to be in the caſes abovementioned, yet this faculty when employed at leaſt in the higher ſpecies of compoſition, dwelling on *ſublime* and *abſtracted* objects, and forming as it were a new creation of its own, muſt be originally of a *more exalted caſt* (if we may thus expreſs it) in a mind directed to ſuch purſuits, than when it re-

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when he appeared as a competitor for glory with Montecuculi; in the firſt Italian campaigns of Eugene, and as an inſtance adequate to any of the former; in the laſt proof exhibited by Marlborough of his conſummate abilities, when he commanded againſt Villars at the ſiege of Bouchaine.—It will be obſerved that we have only ſelected examples here of celebrated leaders acting in oppoſition to each other. A man of knowledge and experience in the art of war may obtain a ſeries of eaſy victories over a weak or inexperienced antagoniſt. But to triumph in the midſt of danger and difficulty by the natural reſources of a copious invention is the province of genius alone. We have likewiſe upon this occaſion conſidered only excellence in the military profeſſion. The diſcerning reader may apply what hath been ſaid on this ſubject to men who act in other ſpheres of life, in which he may be aſſiſted by the preceding obſervations.

ceives

ceives any other bias of what kind ſoever; we would obſerve, that this objection refers not to the *degree* in which invention ſubſiſts, but to the particular ſubjects to which it diſcovers a propenſity. Theſe however are objects wholly diſtinct from each other. He who raiſeth a maſs of iron from the earth, poſſeſſeth it is evident *the ſame degree* of natural ſtrength with him who bears a quantity of gold or diamonds preciſely equal in weight to the former. The diſparity lies therefore not in the ſtrength of the two men, but in the objects to which it is directed. Swift and Butler were neither of them geniuſes of a very exalted claſs. Yet it will not we preſume be denied that the former in his Tale of a Tub, and in the Travels of Gulliver, the latter in his inimitable Hudibras, diſcover copious, fruitful, and even original imagination. But without eſtimating the comparative value of different objects, it is ſufficient for us to obſerve at preſent, that the mind of that perſon who preſides over a great people and conducts the complicated machine of government with abi-

lities

lities adequate to the office *; that the intellectual powers of that commander who

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* Quintilian, ſolicitous of drawing almoſt every human excellence within the vortex of eloquence, will not give up the character mentioned in the text to the claim of philoſophy. He contends that ſuch a man ought likewiſe to be eſteemed an orator. His words are remarkable.—"Neque enim hoc conceſſerim, rationem rectæ, honeſtæque vitæ ad Philoſophos relegandam; cum vir ille vere civilis, & *publicarum privatarumque rerum* adminiſtrationi accommodatus; qui regere conciliis urbes, fundare legibus, emendare judiciis poſſit; non *aliter ſit profecto quam orator.* Quare tametſi me fateor uſurum quibuſdam quæ Philoſophorum libris continentur tamen ea jure, vereque contenderim eſſe operis noſtri, *proprieque* ad *Artem Oratoriam* pertinere." The truth of this obſervation depends in a great meaſure upon the ſenſe in which we underſtand the word Orator. If we underſtand by this term a power of ſpeaking in ſuch a manner as to obtain the purpoſes of convincing, pleaſing and moving the paſſions, it is certain that the poſſeſſion of the firſt of theſe qualifies men principally to give laws to ſociety; and that it hath diſtinguiſhed perſons who ſhared not at leaſt in any eminent degree of the laſt. Such men therefore could not with propriety be denominated *eloquent*, at leaſt according to Cicero's definition of the word. "Erit *Eloquens* is qui ita dicit, ut *probet*, ut *delectet*, ut flectat. Probare *neceſſitatis* eſt, delectare *ſuavitatis*, flectere *victoriæ*."

lays down the tranſactions of a future year, and in the proſecution of his plan, accommodates himſelf to difficult, perplexing, and unexpected obſtructions; that theſe are fitted by nature to form great ideas, and whether endowed or not with a talent for compoſition, poſſeſs an eminent ſhare of the powers that give riſe to its operating in an enlarged and comprehenſive direction.

We have now evinced from a ſeries of obſervation on the characters of men, that the art of which we here treat, conſidered as regarding the faculties of the mind, neither accompanies neceſſarily the poſſeſſion of any of theſe viewed ſeparately; or even ariſeth from the degree in which they are conferred when acting in combination. —"What then, it may be aſked, *is* Compoſition in the preſent important view of that art, and by what circumſtance is it conſtituted?"—We reply.—"A talent for Compoſition is formed by a ſhare of thoſe intellectual powers we have deſcribed, varied indeed in proportion to the value of that ſpecies to which the mind hath received

ceived a bias; but accompanied in *every caſe* with *a propenſity* to place ſuch ideas as occur to it in lights at the ſame time happy and diverſified, to range theſe in juſt and perſpicuous diſpoſition; to expreſs them in ſuitable words which are ſelected with facility; and to give the whole ſo permanent a form by committing it to writing, as that the mind may contemplate it with pleaſure upon a review." It is not therefore from the proportion of mental qualities conferred on any man, that we are to judge of the degree in which he poſſeſſeth a talent for the art in queſtion, or even of its exiſtence *. The *bias* which theſe

* When we ſpeak of a talent for compoſition (as that term hath been defined) we muſt take care to exclude from this idea, that ſlight propenſity to a ſuperficial kind of writing which ſome men diſcover, in which the thoughts are at the ſame time conceived with quickneſs, and thrown into language with facility. This happens when trite ſubjects fall to be diſcuſſed by minds that are either diſqualified by nature to take any comprehenſive view of things, or when indolence, encouraged by a defective education, prevents a man poſſeſſed of talents from putting theſe to their

theſe receive from nature is the circumſtance particularly to be attended to in forming this eſtimation. The uſual indications of this extraordinary propenſity, and the manner of cultivating it moſt ſucceſsfully, whatever direction it may have received, will be conſidered, when we come to treat of the moſt proper method of bringing the intellectual powers, when diſtinguiſhed by this bias, as nearly as poſſible to a juſt equipoiſe.

2. Having thus taken a view of Compoſition as connected in general with the faculties of the mind, we are next to conſider what is implied in it when viewed as an art diſtinguiſhed by particular characters, conſiſting of various ſpecies, and contributing eminently to promote the happineſs and civilization of mankind.

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their proper uſe. In this laſt caſe, theſe, in conſequence of having early received a different direction from that in which they might have appeared to the higheſt advantage, become at laſt unfit to fix in it with ſuch ſteadineſs as is neceſſary to the accompliſhment of any valuable purpoſe.

In

In order to acquire a juſt idea of our ſubject in theſe points of view, we muſt here make one general obſervation on the qualities that moſt commonly go along with this uncommon and valuable propenſity. It is, that *deliberate* recollection, and a *gradual* rather than *rapid* ſucceſſion of ideas are criteria that in all caſes whatever characteriſe the minds that are thus particularly diſtinguiſhed by nature. A little attention to the ſubject will enable us to judge of the truth of this obſervation, (paradoxical as it may at firſt appear to be) and to obviate the objections that will naturally be made to it.

Diverſified as the ſubjects of Compoſition certainly are, we muſt yet be convinced upon reflection, that there is no ſpecies of the art in which diſpoſition or a certain orderly arrangement of parts is not eſſentially neceſſary. In ſome branches of it indeed this arrangement is no doubt much more conſpicuouſly uſeful than in others; when an Author, for example, muſt deſcend from the general view of a ſubject to contemplate the particular parts of which it conſiſts;

or

or when ſome leading ſentiment is to be ſhown in different lights, and to be illuſtrated by a ſeries of connected obſervations. But ſo indiſpenſible is this requiſition, that the perfection of thoſe performances which are deemed the looſeſt and moſt detached, lies not in the want of methodical accuracy, but in the artful concealment of a regular diſpoſition, by which means the entertainment ariſing from certain graces thrown into a piece with apparent negligence, and the information derived from a well conducted proceſs, are happily united.

In order to render the diſpoſition of objects accurate, it is neceſſary that the mind ſhould poſſeſs a power of contemplating each of theſe ſteadily by itſelf, that it may at the ſame time be fully exhibited, and may occupy the place that moſt naturally belongs to it. But this purpoſe can at no time be effectuated when there is a rapid ſucceſſion of ideas taking place in the mind. The underſtanding (which is the parent of this diſpoſition) muſt curb even the moſt excentric imagination with ſo ſtrong a

rein, as to fix it to one place as long as may be expedient; and to preſcribe to it certain boundaries, within which its range muſt at all times be limited *. Thus therefore it happens that what appears to have been owing to a ſudden effuſion, comes to be ſeen as ariſing from cool recollection; and a faculty to have directed the conduct of ſome procedure in which we might be apt at firſt view to judge that its operation would be in a great meaſure ſuſpended †.

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* The Author laſt quoted, gives his ſanction to this opinion. Thus he not only adviſeth the orator to be cautious and deliberate in his compoſition; but to prove that theſe ingredients conſtitute a bias for the art in general, he adduceth the examples of Salluſt and Virgil. "Sic ſcripſiſſe Salluſtium accepimus, & ſane manifeſtus eſt ex opere ipſo *labor*. Virgilium quoque pauciſſimos die compoſuiſſe verſus auctor eſt Varus. Oratoris alia conditio eſt. Itaque hanc *moram* & *ſollicitudinem* in initiis impero." Inſtit. Orator. lib. x. cap. 3. Deſcribing afterwards the manner in which Compoſition is carried on, he ſays, "*Paulatim* res facilius ſe oſtendent, verba reſpondebunt, Compoſitio ſequetur, cuncta denique ut in familia bene inſtituta, in officio erunt." Id.

† See this point more fully explained, Section II.

Theſe obſervations when followed properly out, will enable us to comprehend the cauſe of a phænomenon formerly taken notice of;—that in many inſtances imagination exerts remarkable influence on the *converſation* of men, who are diſqualified to exerciſe it in any branch of Compoſition *. The *ſallies* of wit, the *quickneſs* of repartee, the power of comprehending a *diſtant* hint; and of expreſſing with facility ideas that ariſe inſtantaneouſly in the mind, indicate (as we formerly obſerved) a certain *volatility* of thought that is loſt in an inſtant *; but which conſtitutes the character of an agreeable companion, and fits the perſon, whom it diſtinguiſheth, peculiarly for ſocial life. But, in the art of which we treat, we have endeavoured to ſhow that qualities wholly different from theſe muſt be exerted in order to characteriſe a good writer. When the man therefore in whom they are acknowledged to ſubſiſt, attempts to range his thoughts at leiſure, and to combine a ſeries of objects ſo

* Page 13.

juſtly

juſtly as that each may throw ſome light upon another, in a comprehenſive detail; the *heat and freedom* with which he thinks upon other occaſions, renders him then unfit to form *an adequate eſtimate*; and the *rapid ſucceſſion of his ideas to expreſs with perſpicuity* that which may occur to him. He on the other hand, who with an animated and vigorous imagination, is qualified to ſelect at leiſure from the variety of objects ſuch as are moſt appoſite, and calculated from the *order* in which they are placed to promote his general purpoſe, muſt it is obvious, in order to excel equally in both characters, be able to think at one time with promptitude, and even precipitance; and at another with deliberate recollection; or his excellence confined to this laſt ſphere, will ceaſe to be conſpicuous in the other.

It will, we are here aware, be immediately ſaid, that however neceſſary this gradual ſucceſſion of ideas may be to excellence in ſome ſpecies of Compoſition, it muſt be limited to the two branches of philoſophy and hiſtory. But with regard

to others, (particularly the poetic art) rapid tranſitions, and apoſtrophes ſeemingly unconnected, not only produce the ſtrongeſt effect, but even the appearance of theſe is neceſſary to perfect the execution. Thus where it will be aſked would be the beauty of the ODE, (that high and inchanting ſpecies of poetic compoſition) if we ſhould deprive it of thoſe animated ſallies, thoſe abrupt and daring flights of genius, which ariſe from an imagination intenſely agitated, and ſtarting with little apparent connection from one object to another *? The ſame

* From ſuch views as theſe it probably was that ſome of the ancients were led to conſider poetry in general as a kind of enthuſiaſtic effuſion ariſing from a divine and irreſiſtible impulſe; and the POET inſpired by his MUSE, like the ſibyl on her tripod, throwing out dark myſterious, and prophetic exhibitions. Thus even in later ages among the Romans, the word VATES ſignified equally a *poet*, and a *prophet*. Strabo conſiders poetic enthuſiaſm as a kind of divine inſpiration reſembling the prophetic. Ενθουσιασμος επενευσιν τινα θειαν εχειν δοκει, και ΤΩ ΜΑΝΤΙΚΩ γενει πλησιαζειν. βιβ. I. Plato in the ſame manner ſets out in his beautiful dialogue on this ſubject by calling poetry ΕΝΘΕΙΑ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ,

ſame queſtion may be applied with ſome variation to every other ſpecies of the art, the didactic alone excepted.

But before we pronounce a deciſion on this ſubject, let us endeavour to diſtin-

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ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ, an inſpired energy, and goes ſo far as to affirm οτι Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΣ εϛιν ο λεγων, that God himſelf is the ſpeaker in their compoſitions. ΠΛΑΤ. ΙΩ. Again he tells us, as the reſult of his obſervations on this ſubject, Εγνω ουν αυ και περι ϖοιητων εν ολιγω τουτο, οτι ου ΣΟΦΙΑ ποιοιεν α ποιοιεν, αλλα φυσει τινι και ΕΝΟΘΥΣΙΑΖΟΝΤΕΣ ωσπερ οι ΘΕΟΜΑΝΤΕΣ και ΧΡΗΣΜΩΔΟΙ. ΑΠΟΛΟΓ. ΣΟΚΡ. κεφ. Ζ. Ariſtotle and the elegant writers of the Auguſtan age ſpeak much more rationally and philoſophically on this ſubject. The reader who chooſeth to enquire into their ſentiments, may conſult particularly the firſt and tenth chapter of the Poetics of the former, and the writings of Cicero throughout. Admiting however the definition of Plato to be juſt and appropriated, it will no more follow, that a man whoſe powers are abſorbed in the contemplation of abſtracted objects, ſhould on *that account* be diſqualified to ſurvey theſe ſeparately with attention, and to diſpoſe of each in the beſt manner, than that his eye when beholding an agreeable and diverſified landſcape, ſhould be always diſqualified to take cognizance of particular beauties or defects.

guiſh, on every occaſion, betwixt the ſtrength of that impreſſion which one object makes upon a great imagination, and a ſeries of theſe paſſing before it perhaps in quick but ſuperficial review. Keeping this neceſſary diſtinction in our eye, we ſhall find that even in thoſe poetic productions in which we meet with the boldeſt turns, and the moſt unexpected tranſitions, the genius of the POET appears in the ſignificance that he gives to particular lineaments of his portrait; in the colour that he throws upon the moſt ſtriking and diſtinguiſhed features; in the ſelection of appropriated images; and in the attitude and diſpoſition of every ſeparate figure of the piece, a work that requires him to dwell with attention on the ideas that paſs ſucceſſively in review before his mind to whatever degree of fervid contemplation it may be wrought up *.

In

* This aſſertion may require to be exemplified — Let us take an example from one of the moſt ſeemingly irregular productions of the bard, whom *impetuous*

In the moſt perfect productions of genius, both ancient and modern, the *diſcerning*

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petuous imagination moſt eminently diſtinguiſheth. It is his third Olympic addreſſed to Theron of Agrigentum. Upon a ſuperficial view of this ode, nothing is conſpicuous to the reader, but an enthuſiaſtic bard addreſſing Caſtor, Pollux, and Helena (deities who have no concern in the games of Greece) inſtead of invoking Jupiter, Minerva, or Apollo; or beginning with the praiſes of the hero whom he profeſſed to celebrate. With no apparent connection he drags Hercules into the ode a little after, and tranſports his reader in an inſtant from the plain of Olympus to the Utopian clime of Hyperborea. Having informed us that Hercules tranſplanted an olive from this country to Greece, that the Olympic victors might be crowned with it, he takes occaſion to pay a compliment to Theron with which the ode concludes.—Such is the firſt appearance of this piece in which a number of heterogeneous ideas ſeem to have poured upon the mind of the poet, and to have been jumbled together without coherence. But when we come to obſerve, that by repreſenting as *ſacred* every circumſtance relating to theſe games, the higheſt honour was reflected upon the conqueror, who was thus ſuppoſed to be the peculiar favourite of the gods; when we are informed that Caſtor and Pollux were ſuppoſed to have been appointed by Hercules the guardians and patrons of the *conſecrated olive*; when we advert likewiſe that being tranſplanted from a

ing reader will find this capacity of cool recollection, thoſe criteria that indicate a gradual ſucceſſion of ideas in the thoughts of the writer diſtinguiſhing his performance upon every occaſion. Thus we ob-

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country whoſe inhabitants were thought to enjoy *perfect felicity*, the happineſs of Theron is more ſtrongly ſet before us, by having this ſymbol of pleaſure wreathed around his head, than by the moſt ſtudied deſcription:—when we attend to theſe circumſtances, we are led to admire the addreſs of the poet in the conduct of his ſubject; the artful and even judicious ſelection of his topics, and the *arrangement* obvious in the *whole piece*. It were eaſy to ſhow likewiſe that the imagination of Pindar, impetuous as it is, yet dwells with ſteadineſs upon particular objects; and that he diſcovers at the ſame time vivacity and preciſion in the conception, the colouring, and the diſpoſition of his figures. In the very ode that we have ſelected on this occaſion; obſerve the beautiful and finiſhed picture which he ſets before the reader, of the moon ſhining on the altar of Jupiter, at the time when this olive was conferred on the conqueror.

ηδε γαρ αυτω
πατρι μεν βομων αγισθεν-
των διχομηνις ολον χρυσαρματος
εσπερας οφθαλμον αντεφλεξε μηνα.

ΠΙΝΔ. ΟΛΥΜΠ. Γ.

ſerve

ſerve Homer, like a conſummate general overlooking the battle from an eminence, maintaining a majeſtic and uniform compoſure in the midſt of tumult and univerſal commotion. He deſcribes particularly the ground upon which the armies engaged; carries the reader's eye ſucceſſively from one ſcene to another, as they may be ſuppoſed to have changed their ſituation: he drops one hero ſometimes in the moſt intereſting part of the action, that he may introduce another, whoſe different manners give an entertaining variety to the poem, and to the diſplay of whoſe peculiar character the circumſtances are happily adapted. In ſhort, when a *criſis* is brought on in the action, we find this great genius pauſing in the midſt of his career to render by ſublime and appropriated imagery every circumſtance relating to the combatants, a ſucceſſive object of admiration. Thus the helmet, the plumage, the ſhield, the buckler, and the very point of the ſpear of Achilles are called in to heighten the deſcription of that exalted ſphere in which this hero conſtantly moves. This conduct

duct is wholly different from that which a man would have purſued, whoſe ideas poured in with haſte and rapidity. Such a man, had he attended to *all* the circumſtances which Homer hath diſplayed to ſuch advantage, would have paſſed each of theſe over as quickly as poſſible, in order to arrive at the principal event. Embarraſſed with the variety of his materials, his work would conſiſt rather of brilliant ſtrokes ſcattered profuſely throughout, than of proportioned figures completely exhibited. In ſhort, whatever ſpecies of Compoſition we may ſuppoſe a man of this character to attempt, his ideas muſt be looſe and disjointed, his expreſſion obſcure and inaccurate, though ſelected with much difficulty; and unable to ſupport either the majeſty of deſcription, or the ſeries of argument, every part of his performance would be left uncompleted.

From the whole therefore it is we preſume obvious, that imagination, however naturally irregular, muſt be able to *contemplate with attention* the figures that

compoſe a whole piece; and an Author of whatever denomination, to adjuſt the members of his work with coolneſs and recollection, otherwiſe he will be unequal to the taſk of exhibiting each (at leaſt in Compoſition) with grace, proportion, and energy.

We have, in the courſe of our obſervations on this ſubject, taken our examples principally from one of the higheſt ſpecies of poetry, becauſe it is *here*, that the qualities we have mentioned as accompanying a propenſity to the art of which we treat in this work, are judged to be unneceſſary, if they can be ſo in any caſe whatever. Having thus therefore ſhown their influence and importance in this ſphere, we have much eaſier work with the others; in which an ultimate end is *obviouſly* kept in view, while we follow the writer through a methodiſed enquiry; and attend to the operation of each intellectual power, as well as to the effect ariſing from their general combination. Philoſophy, hiſtory, eloquence, and criticiſm, conſidered in this point of view, will amply confirm the pre-

ceding obſervations; from which at preſent we may define Compoſition, when viewed as conſiſting of diverſified characters, and diſtinguiſhed into various ſpecies; to be "that ART by which the ſeveral parts of a ſubject are ſo juſtly fitted to each other, as to form a *proportioned* and *beautiful whole*."—Of the manner in which this end is accompliſhed, of the office aſſigned to each faculty, as well as of the *united* power of all in bringing it about, we now proceed to treat more particularly.

SECTION II.

Of the Province of the Underſtanding in Compoſition.

AMONG the faculties of the mind, that by which man is chiefly diſtinguiſhed from all inferior creatures, forms in the preſent, as in every ſimilar inveſtigation, the great and primary object of attention. The offices therefore of the underſtanding, as theſe have already been explained

explained in general, we ſhall now conſider particularly as far as the preſent ſubject is concerned, according to the method formerly laid down *.

The criteria from which the judgment of a writer is rendered principally conſpicuous, are the diſcovery of a theory or hypotheſis; the diſpoſition of parts in the plan of a work in ſuch order as moſt effectually promotes an ultimate purpoſe; the comprehenſion of this plan as adapted fully to the ſubject of whatever kind; and finally a certain propriety of ſentiments and of illuſtration, which univerſally indicates the prevalence of this faculty, and may therefore be regarded as a perpetual deſignation of it.—On each of theſe heads, conſidered by itſelf, we ſhall throw together ſome obſervations.

1. Upon a firſt view it may appear ſomewhat extraordinary to aver that any eminent ſhare of *reaſon* is indicated by the *diſcovery* of an hypotheſis, as invention of every kind is uſually aſcribed to imagina-

* Section I. page 7.

tion,

tion, which is on that account denominated, by way of eminence, the inventive faculty. The propriety with which this term is applied to it we ſhall have occaſion to examine in the ſubſequent ſection. It is of importance to the preſent ſubject to obſerve, that two diſtinct kinds of invention will be found to take place in the different branches of Compoſition, and to characteriſe the perſons who excel in it. The firſt of theſe is diſtinguiſhed by an aſſemblage of original ideas brought together without much recollection; by the peculiar and happy lights that are thrown upon truths already known, either in conſequence of a well adapted expreſſion, or the application of new and uncommon illuſtrations; by the unbeaten paths into which an Author falls; and by the ſudden *flaſhes of light* (if we may thus expreſs it) which he caſts around him. In theſe offices it is obvious that imagination is *principally* employed, which never fails to excite when obviouſly predominant, a deſire of deviating upon *every occaſion* from the received opinions of mankind.

The

The other kind of invention is conſtituted by the intenſe and ſteady effort of underſtanding, which eſtimating the comparative ſtrength of arguments, and advancing from ſimpler to more compounded exhibitions in its reſearch, deduceth at laſt ſome concluſion from principles formerly known, which may at the ſame time be *new*, and eſtabliſhed upon the juſteſt foundation. A proceſs of this nature is directed principally, if not wholly by the judgment of the writer: it is completed by patience and aſſiduity; qualities that are particularly characteriſtical of the prevalence of this faculty, whoſe exertion either enables a man to ſtrike out ſome truth that had been formerly undiſcovered, or to build a new ſyſtem from the light in which he placeth received maxims.

When we mention the placing common ſentiments in a new point of view as a ſpecies of invention ſometimes ariſing from judgment, and ſometimes principally from imagination, we are not to ſuppoſe that it will be a matter of much difficulty to diſtinguiſh the cauſe from which this effect

is derived in particular inſtances. We have already afforded a criterion ſufficient to determine this matter when it was obſerved, that when a work is characteriſed by the prevalence of imagination, even where no *original* ſentiment is diſplayed, yet ſome peculiar energy will diſtinguiſh the expreſſion; or ſome ſtriking and uncommon illuſtrations will give ſtrength and energy to the thoughts *. Reaſon on the contrary never aims at merit of this kind. Conſidered by itſelf, what Addiſon ſays of the ſoul when viewed abſtractedly from its paſſions, may be applied with great propriety to this faculty of it. "It is ſlow in its reſolves, and equally delibe-

* A modern critic ſets this matter in ſo juſt a light by the uſe of a beautiful and appropriated image, that the reader of taſte will peruſe it with pleaſure. Speaking of the difficulty of entering into characters he ſays—"Quare ſapienter Plato ut lævaret hoc onere philoſophos præcepit, ut in *ſumma* rerum conſiſterent, ad *ſingula* ne deſcendent. Nempe *ſuprema* & *propinqua cælo aeris pars* a turbis libera eſt: non cogitur illa in nubem, non in tempeſtatem propellitur, non verſatur in turbinem. *Inferior* tonat ac fulminat." Prolus: prima."

rate

rate in its execution. It requires therefore often to be awakened by the paſſions, that the man may be vigorous and attentive in the proſecution of his deſigns *."

To this cautious procedure it is owing, that a diſcovery effectuated by the underſtanding is always confirmed by clearer as well as more ſatisfying evidence, than that in which another power of the mind propoſeth the end, and reaſon is compelled to ſupply the moſt probable means of bringing it about †. In this laſt caſe the power above mentioned is ſtraitened in every exertion; and we diſcover with very little attention, that circumſtances are brought together to ſupport an untenable propoſition, which neceſſarily fail in the accompliſhment of their purpoſe. But in the other inſtance, when judgment at the ſame time propoſeth a certain end, and conducts the ſeries of obſervation or of argument that

* Spectator, Vol. iv. No. 255.

† "Cum ſit poſita (ratio) in inventione nec elocutionis ornamenta magnopere deſideret, aut circa memoriam & pronunciationem laboret." Quintil. lib. vi. cap. 5.

leads to its attainment, the tendency of each of theſe to promote this purpoſe is at once conſpicuous; and all, when taken together, naturally coaleſce in that point in which they ought to concentrate. Thus the whimſical theory of Malebranche *, and that of our ingenious countryman Burnet †, though relating to ſubjects wholly diſtinct from each other, yet equally embarraſs their authors, though far from being deficient in clearneſs of intellectual perception; and lead them either into the higheſt refinements of metaphyſical inveſtigation ‡, as in the firſt inſtance, or into

* De la Recherche de la Verité.

† See his celebrated work entitled Sacra Theoria Telluris.

‡ The great doctrine inculcated in this extraordinary work is, that ſpirits living in the divine mind, in the ſame manner as bodies occupy ſpace, all things are ſeen by theſe as exiſting originally in the deity. Recherche liv. iii. part 1. This ſtrange hypotheſis has led our author into many abſurd, though ingenious diſquiſitions, which it is not our buſineſs to examine here. The principal of theſe (particularly his idea of an *infinite Reaſon*) the judicious Locke hath expoſed and refuted with great preciſion and ſtrength of argument. See the Examination of Malebranche, in his Works.

forced

forced conſtructions of paſſages tortured from their obvious ſignification, as in the laſt *. The reaſon of this embarraſſment in both is, that the ultimate purpoſe of each work is that which imagination, not reaſon, originally ſuggeſted. But having been once adopted, this faculty is called in as an aſſiſtant to ſupport poſitions which it would perhaps have rejected. Still however we obſerve its ſtrength; but it is ſtrength miſapplied. Like Samſon when deprived of ſight, it retains its vigour, but employs it not to rear a fabric but to put ſuch materials together as may be thrown down.—Let the reader of diſcernment compare either of theſe with the excellent work entitled the Analogy betwixt Natural and Revealed Religion, in which the underſtanding purſues a certain purpoſe thro'

* It is not our preſent buſineſs to enter into the proof of this obſervation. The reader who conſiders the manner in which this moſt ingenious writer hath managed the proofs of his theory that are drawn from Scripture, will obſerve the plauſible appearance which he gives to an interpretation of paſſages that will not bear to be cloſely examined.

a ſeries of rational and ſatisfactory evidences; and he will perceive the eaſy proceſs by which this faculty obtaineth its end when permitted to operate *univerſally as a principal*, inſtead of the *conſtraint* and *obſcurity* that mark its progreſs, when employed to ſupport hypotheſes which it did not form.

It ought likewiſe to be obſerved on this head, that when it is an author's purpoſe either to diſcover or to elucidate truth by an accurate enumeration of principles and inferences, the mind muſt advance in its work with the utmoſt circumſpection, as in the ſcale of arguments corroborating each other, the defect or weakneſs of *one ſtep* is ſufficient to marr the effect of all. Diſproportion of parts is indeed much more conſpicuous in ſuch a work, than in compoſition embelliſhed with metaphor and imagery. In this laſt caſe we are willing to ſuppoſe that an author hath protracted his examination of a favourite topic, and hath ſtrained a particular branch of his work beyond its due dimenſions, from the natural and irreſiſtible impulſe of a warm imagination.

imagination. But in the other, as the reader receives leſs entertainment from the external decorations, he is at leiſure to examine attentively the proportions of the figure, and is ſtruck with a defect in this circumſtance that might have otherwiſe eſcaped the moſt accurate obſerver. An underſtanding adequate to its ſubject, and unimpelled by other powers that marr its operations, by keeping one ultimate aim cloſely in ſight; and by ſetting in a clear light every ſtep by which we approach to it, ſeldom permits this fault to become ſo obvious as to give offence even to thoſe, whoſe powers of diſcernment enable them to decide on this point with the greateſt preciſion.

Upon the whole, the requiſition principally neceſſary to carry on the diſcovery of unknown truth, is an underſtanding unembarraſſed in its purſuit by another power, and adopting the idioms of imagination only to elucidate its principles *, inſtead

* Two celebrated ancients, Ariſtotle and Quintilian, ſeem to think very differently of the propriety

inſtead of being admitted to evince the genius of the writer, while they throw an air of obſcurity over his performance.

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with which metaphors ought to be introduced, and of their uſe in Compoſition. The former (perhaps ſomewhat too haſtily) condemns theſe altogether as productive univerſally of obſcurity, and will not allow even images, which he diſtinguiſheth from the other, to be introduced, when theſe have a tincture of poetry. The latter points out their uſe and expedience with great accuracy. Αλλος ει (ſays the Greek philoſopher) και Μεταφοραν ειρηκεν, οιον ει την επιστημεν αμεταπτωτον, &c. ΠΑΝΤΑ γαρ ΑΣΑΦΕΣ το καλα ΜΕΤΑΦΟΡΑΝ ΛΕΓΟΜΕΝΟΝ. ΤΟΠΙΚ. βιβ. ζ. In another place he ſays, Εστι δε και η ΕΙΚΩΝ Μεταφορα· Διαφερει γαρ μικρον· Οταν γαρ ειπη του Αχιλλεα—Ως δε Λεων επορουσεν.—ΕΙΚΩΝ εστιν. Οταν δε Λεων επορουσε, ΜΕΤΑΦΟΡΑ. Δια γαρ το αμφω ανδρειους ειναι, προσηγορευσε μετενεγκας Λεοντα τον Αχιλλεα· Χρησιμον δε ΕΙΚΩΝ και εν λογω. ΟΛΙΓΑΚΙΣ δε, ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΟΝ γαρ. Οιστεαι δε ωσπερ αι μεταφοραι. ΡΗΤΟΡ. βιβ. Γ. κεφ. δ.

"Indocti quoque (ſays the Roman critic) non ſentientes, metaphora frequenter utuntur. Eas facimus, aut quia neceſſe eſt, aut quia ſignificantius, aut quia decentius. Ubi nihil horum præſtabit, quod transfertur improprium eſt." Quintil. Inſtitut. lib. viii. c. 6.

II. From

II. From conſidering the diſcovery of truth, as regulated by the underſtanding, we come now to take a view of this power as employed particularly in regulating the diſpoſition of parts, in ſuch a manner as contributes moſt effectually to promote the deſign of the whole. In this important province of its work, reaſon may be viewed both as laying down the *general* plan or method in which a ſubject is to be treated; and as ranging the ideas that occur upon entering into an examination of *particular* parts in a juſt and natural order.

1. That it is the underſtanding alone which regulates the general diſpoſition of ſentiments and illuſtrations in all caſes whatever, will be acknowledged immediately, when we attend to its conſtant manner of procedure. From that ſlow recollection by which this faculty is diſtinguiſhed, it is qualified to diſcover the beſt method of treating any ſubject, whether ſimple or copious; and after having thoroughly inveſtigated its nature, to take cognizance of the propriety, as well as

comprehenſion of a general deſign *.—We obſerved formerly, that there is no ſpecies of

* Pliny ſpeaks of juſt diſpoſition, in the art of which we treat here, as the effect of an extenſive acquaintance with the writings of the learned. "Utinam Ordo, ſaltem & tranſitus & figuræ ſimul ſpectarentur. Nam *invenire* præclare, & enunciare magnifice, interdum etiam *Barbari* ſolent; *diſponere apte*, &c. niſi ERUDITIS negatum eſt." Epiſtol. lib. iii. Epiſt. 13. This obſervation is no doubt thus far true, that by being converſant with works in which an exact method is laid down and followed out, we acquire a habit of ranging our ideas on every ſubject in a certain regulated ſucceſſion, which is the effect in a great meaſure of art and attention. This is probably what our author means by that APT diſpoſition which he appropriates peculiarly to the learned. Otherwiſe, as the reaſon of every man who is capable of inventing, preſcribes to him likewiſe ſome method of ranging together the means of obtaining a certain end, nothing but a total deprivation of this faculty could make him jumble crude conceptions together in ſo diſcordant a manner, as to afford no glimmering of light by which we may trace his deſign. For (to adopt the language of a conſummate judge) "Ut opera extruentibus, ſatis non eſt ſaxa, atque materiam, & cætera ædificanti utilia congerere; niſi iis collocandis Artificum manus adhibeatur: ſic in dicendo, quamlibet abundans rerum copia, cumulum tantum habeat atque congeſtum, niſi illas eaſdem in ordinem digeſtas, atque inter ſe com-

of Compoſition in which a certain harmonious arrangement of parts is not eſſentially neceſſary. This order, as was likewiſe obſerved, is no doubt much more conſpicuous in the conduct of a philoſophical theory *, or in treating of any complex ſubject, than in looſer and more negligent compoſition, as it may be termed. But the perfection of this laſt, however ſeemingly irregular, lies not in the

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commiſſas *Diſpoſitio* devinxerit. Oratio carens *hac virtute*, tumultuetur neceſſe eſt, & ſine rectore fluitet; nec cohæreat ſibi: multa repetat, multa tranſeat, velut nocte in ignotis locis errans; nec initio, nec fine propoſito Caſum potius quam Concilium ſequatur." Quintil. Inſtit. lib. vii. c. 1.

* The rules of philoſophical diſpoſition are comprehenſively laid down in few words by one of the firſt and beſt of critics. Αναγκη τον τροπον τυτον ωροαγειν εκ των ασαφεστερων μεν τη φυσει, ημιν δε σαφεςερων επι τα σαφεςερα τη φυσει και γνωριμωτερα. Εςι δ' ημιν το ωρωτον δηλα και σαφη τα συγκεχυμενα μαλλον· Υστερον δε εκ τυτων γινεται γνωριμα τα ςοιχεια και αι αρχαι, διαιρυσι ταυτα, &c. Τα ωαιδια το μεν ωρωτον ωροσαγορευει ωαντας τυς ανδρας, ωατηρας, και μητερας τας γυναικας· Υςερον δε διοριζει τυτων εκατερον· ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. ΦΥΣΙΚ. βιβ. κεφ. Α.

want

want of diſpoſition, which would include that of every other excellence; but in a certain accurate, though apparently negligent diſtribution of parts, in which the mind perceives ſymmetry, upon a cloſe examination, and beauty, conſtituted as much by the happy poſition of elegant decorations, as by their original invention *.

* To the examples of this already adduced from the writings of the ancients, we need only to add at preſent, that the firſt of Roman philoſophers appears to have been ſo ſenſible of the advantages that reſult from an accurate diſpoſition in his own art, that he wrote a treatiſe purpoſely on this very ſubject, entitled De Partitione Oratoria, which is now unhappily loſt. In his work however entitled De Oratore he treats this point at great length, and lays down the rules of exact arrangement with his uſual preciſion. "Ut aliquid ante rem dicamus, deinde ut rem exponamus; poſt ut eam probemus, noſtris præſidiis confirmandis, contrariis refutandis; deinde ut concludamus, atque ita peroremus. Hoc dicendi genus natura ipſa præſcribit." Lib. ii. c. 76. Again he ſays, "Neque diſputemus quibus aſſequi poſſimus ut ea quæ dicamus intelligantur. Latine ſcilicet dicendo verbis uſitatis, &c. non diſcerptis ſententiis, non præpoſteris temporibus, non confuſis perſonis, non perturbato ordine." Lib. iii. c. 13.

Eloquence,

Eloquence, in whoſe compoſition an exact and perſpicuous order ought invariably to be obſerved, is here altogether out of the queſtion. But what ſhall we ſay of certain gay effuſions of wit and humour, in which thoughts appear to be careleſsly thrown out juſt as they occur, and of thoſe animated ſallies that derive their origin from a glowing and plaſtic imagination? —When theſe laſt conſiſt only of a ſingle thought, the end is effectuated as ſoon as this thought is placed before the mind in ſuitable colours; and the only diſpoſition requiſite for this purpoſe is that of language and imagery, of whoſe propriety the underſtanding decides with a preciſion proportioned to its ſtrength and perſpicacity. But when the deſign in both caſes is ſomewhat more complex, as demanding a various aſſemblage of ideas, we may obſerve that a *climax* is either carried on as in the laſt inſtance, when it is from the *diſpoſition* of inferior objects that the principal derives its importance; or in the firſt, that objects are put together ſo as to reflect light on each other, and to accompliſh

compliſh an end that is kept cloſely in ſight. It is, as we may ſoon perceive, the judgment of an author that brings about both the purpoſes that are here taken notice of. When the circumſtances in the conduct of an action or deſcription are made to riſe in their ſignificance, ſo as to arreſt the attention, as well as gradually exalt the reader's imagination as he proceeds; this proceſs, though not perhaps conſidered in a proper view, juſt when the mind is intenſely animated by the ſubject, yet upon recollection will diſcover an arrangement carried on by that faculty which is the parent of order; and which hath aſſigned to each member that place in contributing to produce this effect, which it ought moſt naturally and juſtly to occupy.

With regard in the ſame manner to the looſeſt effuſions of humorous pleaſantry, is it from unconnected ſallies that we receive entertainment *? The deſcription that

* In conducting pieces of this kind, men of genius are ſometimes apt to adopt from negligence a faulty expreſſion,

that is replete with ridicule, pleaſes as much by being judiciouſly introduced, as when obſerved to be wrought up with pointed and particular ſtrokes; and the tale that excites the moſt agreeable ſenſations, even though ſeemingly abruptly introduced, yet pleaſes in conſequence of an appoſite diſpoſition, by which it is brought to coaleſce with the deſign of the whole. Not only therefore does this governing power of the mind place ideas in a cer-

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expreſſion, (eſpecially when a figured diction is attempted) which the malignity of an adverſary will make him impute to deſign. It has ever been a common caſe, as an excellent modern critic obſerves, "Viros eruditos ſæpe improprium ex negligentia ſtylum quaſi tropicum aut figuratum habere, ex quo errore fit, ut quod per *incuriam* effuſum eſt, id de *induſtria* dictum exiſtiment, adeoque urgeant quod urgeri non debet." Clerici Ars Crit. vol. I. part. ii. ſect. 1. c. 11. This fault is commonly occaſioned by having fixed attention too cloſely upon ſome one part, in endeavouring to obtain which the author unwarily lays himſelf open in another. That apparent negligence which gives ſome pieces ſo inchanting an air of elegance, is the effect of deſign, not of accident; and in order to be gained in perfection, *correctneſs* of language is as neceſſary to be attended to as muſical arrangement.

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tain methodiſed order, when thoſe ſubjects are treated in which its operation is at firſt view *leaſt perceptible*; but an extenſive ſhare of it may likewiſe be frequently diſcovered by a penetrating judge to have been exerted in a province, in which a ſuperficial reader might deem its exerciſe to be *leaſt requiſite*. The underſtanding in all the inſtances we have here adduced, brings into one point of view the principal members or outlines of a figure; and though not perhaps exerting the ſame ſteady recollection that renders inferior means ſubſervient through the whole courſe of a work to ſome purpoſe of importance, is yet equally conſpicuous in the conduct of both.

2. Having thus taken a view of the ſphere of underſtanding in the preſent art, as far as the general plan or method of a work is regulated by it; we now proceed to conſider its influence on the diſpoſition of ſubordinate parts, ranged together in ſuch cloſe and natural order as gives conſiſtence and regularity to the whole.

As

As in the former obſervations we viewed reaſon as the parent of diſpoſition in the general ſenſe of that word; we are here to trace its operation more particularly in maintaining that ſecret connection throughout; without which, a performance muſt ceaſe immediately not only to be edifying, but intelligible.

In the various ſpecies of Compoſition, the connection ſubſiſting betwixt the parts of a diſcourſe, is ſometimes ſuch as an ordinary ſhare of underſtanding will enable a man to trace without difficulty; and ſometimes ſo ſubtle and delicate as to be perceptible only to the reader of diſcernment. A connection of the firſt kind takes place in any performance, when we follow the author from one point to another in his procedure; and obſerve him attending firſt to the general parts of his plan, and next to the objects that fall ſucceſſively under particular branches of it, until the work is completed by the union of all. When this is the caſe, it is a matter of no great difficulty to judge of the ſteps by which a proceſs of any kind is

carried on; and even though we do not thoroughly comprehend intermediate ſentiments, to pronounce upon the coherence and ſtability of the whole.

A connection however equally cloſe, though of a much leſs obvious kind, takes place upon many occaſions, chiefly in the higher kinds of the art of which we here treat; and ſuch as it is the province of diſcernment (in the proper ſenſe of that term) to trace out particularly. This happens either when the thread of ſentiment is wrought out ſo finely as to be perceptible, like the film of a ſpider, only to the eye that can *minutely* examine it; or when ſtrokes by which it is propoſed to penetrate the heart are thrown out with little apparent regularity, and may be conſidered as bold deviations from the ſubject. With regard to the firſt, it often happens that thoughts are ſpun out in ſuch a manner by paſſing through a metaphyſical alembic, as to eſcape the cognizance both of the author or the critic. It is no doubt one of the ſureſt proofs of underſtanding to be able to determine the boundary, be-

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yond which this power cannot aſcertain the reality of objects; and thoſe who have raſhly attempted to paſs it, have involved themſelves unavoidably in ambiguity and error. We find it often difficult to trace the connection of ideas in ſuch diſquiſitions, even when theſe are ſufficiently diſtinct from the abſtracted nature of the ſubject that ſuggeſts them. The taſk appropriated here particularly to the reaſoning power, is that of adhering ſteadily to a general purpoſe, and of connecting a ſeries of intermediate ideas, by whoſe intervention it is to be gained both with that end, and with each other.

The ſecond claſs of objects in which we obſerved that it is a matter of difficulty many times to trace a cloſe connection, conſiſts of ſtrokes that exalt the imagination, or penetrate the heart. Here the underſtanding of the writer is deemed by the ſuperficial to exert no conſpicuous degree of influence. Our judgment, however, when we decide thus at random, is much too haſtily formed in this matter. Attention will ſhow thoſe who are qualified to

judge of it properly, that in order to have any juſt admiration of theſe beauties, it is neceſſary that we ſhould enter into the train of *concealed ideas* which eſtabliſh a connection *not leſs real*, becauſe it may be at firſt imperceptible betwixt theſe ſtrong apoſtrophes and the circumſtances immediately preceding, though the mind glances over ſuch intermediate points of arrangement ſo ſuddenly at the time as not to feel their immediate impreſſion *.

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* We may add here to the remark in the text, that though when the mind is powerfully influenced by any repreſentation, it conſiders not particularly the connection of this with the circumſtances that preceded in every point of view, while the impreſſion is yet ſtrong; it is ſtill in proportion as this correſpondence is really perceived to take place in a greater or leſs extent, that a more or leſs powerful effect is produced by it upon the mind.—The celebrated adjuration of Demoſthenes by the heroes who fell at Marathon and Salamis, to convince the Athenians that they had not done wrong in ſacrificing their lives at Chæronea, muſt have affected but weakly thoſe (if there were any ſuch among his auditors) who knew only in general that the battles he referred to had been fought with the enemies of Greece, but were unacquainted with the

In order to ſet in a clearer light the truth of this remark, let it be farther obſerved, that though where a ſecret connection is perceived invariably to take place, we are not always ready to trace it out particularly; yet when it is either really wanting, or even when at any time we are at a loſs to diſcover it, the defect

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the peculiar honour reflected by theſe victories on the people of Athens, as well as with the glorious cauſe in which they fought. Thoſe among them whoſe anceſtors had fallen in theſe engagements, and who had been accuſtomed to revere them as the martyrs of liberty, would be ſtrongly influenced by a circumſtance that placed before them illuſtrious perſonages in ſo conſpicuous and honourable a light. They would enter with ardour into the intention of the orator, and would compare together the cauſes thus forcibly illuſtrated. But a man qualified by this circumſtance to compare the actions; intereſted in a manner perſonally in both; juſt arrived from the field of Chæronea, and obſerving that Demoſthenes ſeems "to put that defeat (as an ingenious critic explains it, Eſſay on Original Genius, p. 212.) on a level with the glorious victories obtained at Marathon, &c." by conceiving inſtantly the full meaning of the ſpeaker, and loſing no part of the connection, would be ſtruck with this oath in a manner different from the others; and would feel all the emotion which it was intended to excite.

becomes then at once conſpicuous, and is compenſated by no excellence whatever, either of ſentiment or expreſſion. Thus upon peruſing the allegorical portrait of Cebes, he who receives the higheſt entertainment from obſerving the juſt and beautiful manner in which the various incidents of human life are pourtrayed, the errors of mankind detected, and the cauſes perſonified from which theſe laſt are derived; will yet, it is obvious, find diſguſt and ſatiety take place, even when he is contemplating perhaps the moſt exquiſite part of the fable, as ſoon as he becomes unable either to obſerve that peculiar propriety with which the characters are delineated; or to mark that correſpondence of his allegorical perſonages with the originals exiſting in his own mind, which they are brought to ſet before him. As we have therefore already ſeen coolneſs of recollection and exact proportion characteriſing in general the moſt perfect productions of poetry and eloquence; we ſhall find likewiſe a diſpoſition equally harmonious taking place uniformly in the

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ſubordinate members. The real value of a performance in either art can only be eſtimated by that perſon who following the author in his wildeſt excurſions, can trace the manner in which he hath been led to aſſociate apparently diſſimilar ideas; and thus beholds proportion and harmony ſubſiſting through the whole piece; while the whoſe perceptions are leſs exquiſite, or who is diſqualified to judge of the ſubject, either cenſures particular parts as groſsly defective, or condemns the whole as the disjointed reveries of a heated imagination.

Theſe obſervations on the ſubject of connection will enable us to account very naturally for an opinion entertained by the leſs intelligent part of mankind, that judgment and imagination are ſeldom or never united in the ſame mind in any conſiderable meaſure. When a work is impreſſed principally by the latter of theſe powers, they cannot trace the operations of the former in the ſame manner as when it is conſpicuous in an unornamented ſeries of remarks and inferences; and thus

becauſe reaſon doth not aſſume the only form in which they are accuſtomed to diſcern it, every man chooſeth rather to ſuppoſe that ſome defect takes place in the mind of another, than to acknowledge it in his own. Thus it happens that as that internal and delicate perception by which the mind entering into the ſpirit of an Author, ſupplies certain concealed circumſtances, is rarely to be met with; works in which there is the cloſeſt and moſt exquiſite correſpondence of parts are cenſured as deficient in this important character; and that faculty which arrangeth ideas is deemed to have been conferred in a very inconſiderable meaſure, where its energy is really exerted in an eminent degree *.

It

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* It muſt no doubt be acknowledged, that when we conſider arrangement in Compoſition as taking in many diverſified objects, particularly in works of length, and where it is neceſſary to infuſe a large proportion of the idioms of imagination; a man of genius will find conſiderable difficulty in preſerving it uniformly through his whole performance. "Nam & conjuncta quæremus, & genera, & partes generibus ſubjectas; & ſimilitudines,

It muſt no doubt be acknowledged, (as we ſhall endeavour more fully to evince afterwards) that it is the province of the *diſcerning*, rather than of the *judicious* critic, to fill up thoſe chaſms by which the productions of genius are often marked, ſo as to connect parts in a performance

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dines, & diſſimilitudines, & contraria, & conſequentia, & conſentanea, & quaſi præcurrentia, & repugnantia, & cauſas rerum veſtigabimus; & ea quæ ex cauſis arta ſunt & majora, paria, minora quærimus." Cicer. de Orat. lib. ii. c. 39. Here the reader of diſcernment will be at no loſs to make an allowance for the defect of a writer, and to diſtinguiſh ſuch faults as ariſe from exuberance of imagination, from blemiſhes perhaps leſs in themſelves, but compenſated by no peculiar excellence either of ſentiment or expreſſion. Μενω δε ουκ ολιγα και αυτος αμαρτηματα (ſays the ſpirited and diſcerning Longinus) και Ο μηρου, και των αλλων οσοι μεγιστοι, και ηκιστα τοις ωταισμασιν αρεσκομενος, ομως δε υχ αμαρτηματα, μαλλον αυτα εκυσια, καλων η ωαροραματα δι' αμελειαν, ειχη ωυ και ως ετυχεν, υπο μιγαλοφυιας ανεπισατως ωαρεννηνεγεμενα. Επειτοι γε απτωτος ο Απολλωνιος ο των Αργοναυτικων Ποιητης, και τοις βουκολικοις πλην ολιγων των εξοθεν ο Θεοριτος επιτυχεσατος. Αρουν ΟΜΗΡΟΣ αν μαλλον η Απολλωνιος εθελοις γενεσθαι, &c. ΠΕΡΙ ΥΨΟΥΣ, τμημ. ΛΙ.

that may be deemed to have little relation to each other. As high colouring commonly renders its objects obſcure, at leaſt to thoſe who cannot view the image and its original apart from each other; ſo the breaks and daring ſallies of an enraptured imagination are apt to render the whole unintelligible. Even when this power operates not in ſo conſpicuous a manner, it happens as often that obſcurity becomes characteriſtical of a work in which *too much* is left to be ſupplied by the reader, as that diſguſt is excited in him when too little appears for this purpoſe. In order therefore to preſerve the juſt medium betwixt theſe extremes, as the diſcerning faculty which judgeth of the excurſions of genius, ought to regulate thoſe ſo as eaſily to comprehend their connection, ſo the underſtanding in other branches of Compoſition ſhould diſcover its thorough knowledge of a ſubject, by placing every idea clearly before the mind of a reader, and by leaving only ſuch thoughts to be ſuggeſted by him as the objects laid open to him naturally and unavoidably introduce.

Thus

Thus it is that a writer of good ſenſe moſt clearly evinceth the ſolidity and compaſs of his judgment. A reader is flattered when he finds it in his power to complete as it were the intention of the author upon every topic by ſome obvious additions of his own; and whether conſcious or not that theſe were deſignedly left to him, is ſenſible of no deficiency from ſuch an omiſſion in point of connection.

III. As in the preceding obſervations we have endeavoured to ſhow the proceſs by which reaſon either effectuates the diſcovery of truth, or eſtabliſheth order and connection in every branch of Compoſition; we are next to conſider it as conſpicuous in that comprehenſive view of a ſubject which ſhows that no material part hath eſcaped attention. This power of comprehending and of adjuſting a variety of parts to each other, is peculiarly characteriſtical of the judgment of a writer; and ſerves to diſtinguiſh it from imagination (properly ſo called) which ſtarts from one object to another without ever taking in or regulating a great and diverſified ſe-

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ries. This indication of an enlarged underſtanding, in order to be complete, demands attention to be extended to a much greater diverſity of objects than we may at firſt view ſuppoſe. It requires not only that every part of any conſequence ſhould be included in the general eſtimate of a ſubject, which though difficult, it is leaſt uneaſy to perform; but that the manner of treating every point of whatever kind, ſhould be that which is beſt adapted to its nature; and the illuſtrations made uſe of, ſuch as convey the moſt adequate idea of their original objects that can poſſibly be preſented. It often happens that a mind equal to the firſt of theſe requiſitions is deficient in the laſt.—To the full exhibition even of a complicated theme when viewed in general, nothing more is in fact neceſſary, than that obſervation which regulates the draught and the outlines of a figure; of whoſe fitneſs for *this purpoſe* we may pronounce without heſitation; while we ſuſpend our judgment of it as adequate to the fulleſt diſplay of ſubordinate parts,

until

until theſe fall ſeparately under examination.

When we mention as an evidence of comprehenſion, the treating every point in the manner that is beſt adapted to its nature, we are aware that a certain verſatility as well as compaſs of thought is neceſſary to this purpoſe which is rarely to be met with. The knowledge of the beſt method of treating any ſubject, and the power of carrying this with adequate energy into execution, are circumſtances altogether different from each other. Many perſons ſufficiently underſtand the importance and utility of means which they are yet unable to employ properly in the purſuit of a certain end. The mind is ſeldom equal to every part of a theme that requires its faculties to act in various, and ſometimes in oppoſite directions. In ſome it acts as in its native element. But in others, the faculty required to predominate appears to have been forcibly wreſted (if we may thus expreſs it) from its natural bias. Its exertions are therefore unequal, its expreſſion ſtrained, and its conduct in general of that

kind,

kind, which beſpeaks a man who is better able to judge, than qualified to execute. Comprehenſion of intellect however, though it may be conſidered in ſome ſenſe as independent of adequate execution, is then powerfully evidenced, when an author though not diſcovering equal maſtery in the management of every inferior part of his ſubject, eſpecially when conſiſting of many diviſions; yet adopts and follows out a method that is upon the whole agreeable; and ſuch as ſhows the juſt degree of energy in ſome caſes, and a decent aptitude in all. We may obſerve indeed as a criterion univerſally characteriſtical of this faculty that in proportion as the judgment of a writer is extenſive, he will more obviouſly perceive what weight ought to be laid, either upon points which an ordinary reader might overlook, but which introduced and explained with propriety impreſs a ſentiment forcibly on the mind; or upon the general ſtrain of a character, as it may thus be rendered appropriated and intereſting.

1. Examples

1. Examples to confirm the truth of theſe remarks will occur upon examining the moſt approved ſtandards either of philoſophy or of the fine arts. The Socratic method of reaſoning, beyond all others, appears to have ariſen from this knowledge of all the circumſtances that carry conviction to the underſtanding. Thus we find in the Dialogues of Plato, the philoſopher not merely ſuiting his arguments as nearly as poſſible to the character of the ſpeakers; but introducing his ſubjects from the ſimpleſt occurrences, and drawing his illuſtrations from ſuch remote, and yet natural reſources, as moſt ſtrongly evinced his addreſs and comprehenſion *. In this manner

* The reader who contemplates the Socratic manner in the preſent point of light, will be entertained as well as inſtructed by attending to the various methods that are ſucceſſively employed to promote the ends of this philoſophy. He will find Socrates ſometimes (as in the Euthyphron) obtaining the confidence of a ſuperſtitious bigot by a ſeries of compliments artfully addreſſed to his ruling paſſion, and by touching his weakneſs with ſo delicate a hand as to make him pleaſed and ſatisfied with reaſoning that expoſeth it. At others, (as

manner truths of the greateſt importance are gradually laid open to perſons whoſe

(as in the Protagoras) after having ſoothed the pride of the imperious ſophiſt, and diſpoſed him to liſten with patience to a few ſimple queſtions apparently directed only to obtain information, he lays open the falſity of his maxims; and thus inculcates the ſublime doctrines of philoſophy with irreſiſtible energy, while he appears to be converſing familiarly on the plaineſt topics, and even about the ſimpleſt utenſils of life. Varying at other times his method of addreſs to the character of more modeſt and diſpaſſionate hearers, we may obſerve this great man in the Meno, Theagis, Crito, Lyſis, and the two Alcibiades, diſcourſing of virtue, wiſdom, propriety of conduct, friendſhip, rectitude, prayer, &c. and in a manner at the ſame time ſo ſimple and comprehenſive, happily uniting the dignity of the philoſopher with the affability of the friend, that we ceaſe to wonder at the ſublime panygeric made upon him in his *own ſtyle* likewiſe, by the young Acibiades, who compared him to thoſe ſtatues of ſylvan deities whoſe outſide appeared rough and unpoliſhed, but when opened were found only to be *caſes* containing images of ALL THE GODS! The Protagoras and Crito of Plato contain in particular ſtriking evidences of the philoſopher's comprehenſive view of things. In the former the ſophiſt's arguments are refuted by reaſoning drawn as it ſhould ſeem from very diſtant reſources. In the latter, Socrates takes a moſt extenſive ſurvey of an important ſubject, in anſwering the reaſons by which his friend would have perſuaded him to make his eſcape.

curioſity

curioſity is deeply intereſted in the proceſs. Nor is the full deſign of the philoſopher perceived by his antagoniſt, until the concluſion, which he aims to eſtabliſh, ſtrikes at laſt with irreſiſtible evidence upon the mind.

It is ſcarce poſſible to conceive any method more expreſſive of a comprehenſive underſtanding than that which is here preſented to us, when properly carried on. In order to bring it ſucceſsfully into practice, it was neceſſary that the philoſopher, after being fully ſatisfied of that truth which he intended to prove to his adverſary, ſhould be able to conduct in ſuch a manner intermediate means apparently foreign to his purpoſe, but tending in reality directly to it; as that every obſtruction being removed, the mind ſhould yield that aſſent which convincing argumentation finally commands.

2. It was remarked likewiſe that as an enlarged underſtanding becomes thus conſpicuous in the conduct of an argumentative detail, it is not leſs ſo in maintaining upon ſome occaſions conſiſtency of character.

racter. Comprehenſion of intellect is undoubtedly evinced when a character in which various excellencies, imperfections, and foibles are blended, is maintained with ſo much propriety through an extenſive work, as to be known and approved at all times by thoſe ſtriking ſignatures that diſtinguiſh it from others. We muſt carefully ſeparate here the province of imagination in accompliſhing this purpoſe from that of underſtanding. It is undoubtedly by an effort of the firſt of theſe, that thoſe incidents are invented which call into conſpicuous exerciſe the qualities that are here combined in various aſſemblage. But it is by the laſt that an affinity is eſtabliſhed univerſally betwixt the event and the quality diſplayed by it, and the incidents in general are diſpoſed in ſuch a manner as to ſhow the whole to the higheſt poſſible advantage. Of this compaſs of thought by which a writer may evince the clearneſs as well as extent of his underſtanding, we ſhall have occaſion to treat more particularly, when we come to examine the ſpecies

cies of Compoſition in which it is moſt completely diſplayed.

IV. We have now conſidered the province of the reaſoning faculty in the art of Compoſition as conſtituted by the invention of a theory, the arrangement and diſpoſition of parts, and the comprehenſive eſtimate which it forms of a ſubject. From our remarks on the general operations of this power in the departments abovementioned, it will appear, that a very large proportion of it may take place, and in fact does ſo upon many occaſions without being diſcovered. An ordinary obſerver therefore, when effects ariſing from judgment are blended with ſuch as are derived from imagination; without ſome general criterion by which the influence of reaſon may be always determined, will be apt to form unjuſt and ſuperficial eſtimates. In order therefore to ſet this matter in a proper light, and to complete our view of the operations of the underſtanding as far as the preſent ſubject is concerned; we may in general obſerve, that wherever judgment exerts any conſiderable degree of in-

fluence, ſomething juſt and appoſite, ſomething particularly appropriated to the ſubject or occaſion, will appear in *the ſentiment* of a performance. Other marks by which its prevalence may be diſcovered, as ſtrength of argument, juſtneſs of deſign, ſymmetry of parts, or progreſſion of evidence, either relate to particular arts, or to thoſe branches of Compoſition which require this faculty moſt eminently to predominate. But in all productions whatever, *propriety of ſentiment* is invariably characteriſtical of an author's underſtanding; and points indeed ſo naturally to this original, as never, when diſcovered, to be aſcribed to another. But what, it will be ſaid, is meant by this term *propriety* when applied to the ſentiment of Compoſition in the various ſpecies of the art? It is a vague and general deſignation that admits of different views, according to that branch of the preſent ſubject to which it is applied; and its ſenſe ought therefore to be determined and exemplified in each of theſe departments conſidered by itſelf. This requiſition is undoubtedly juſt, and in order to anſwer it, we muſt enter

ſome-

ſomewhat more particularly into the ſubject.

Propriety characteriſing the different ſpecies of Compoſition, ſuggeſts different ideas, according to the nature and tendency of each. Thus in philoſophy, where it is expected that every poſition will be confirmed by the beſt adapted evidence, propriety of ſentiment is ſaid to obtain when the author, though ſometimes drawn into little digreſſions, yet keeps cloſe in general to the principal object of his reſearch; and ſelects from the various arguments or illuſtrations that occur to him, thoſe whoſe immediate tendency is to prove or explain the point which he hath ultimately in view *. In hiſtory, where the narrative manner

* No ancient writer appears to have ſtudied this philoſophical propriety more than the elegant philoſopher mentioned in the preceding note. It is true indeed, that he freely indulges himſelf in digreſſive circumſtances; and his ſublime imagination even catcheth at ſometimes the figures and diction of poetry. See his ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ, ab init. See likewiſe vol. ii. of this work, ſect. iii. But when any point of real impor-

manner takes place of the didactic, ſentiments have propriety, when theſe grow as it were naturally out of the detail, and ſeem to be neceſſary parts of the work itſelf, rather than ſuperfluities that may be lopped off from it*. In eloquence, propriety

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tance is canvaſſed, the reaſoning is uſually conducted with great accuracy and attention. Thus Socrates ſays to his friend in the true ſpirit of a philoſopher: Σκοπεισθαι ουν χρη ημας ειτε ταυτα πρακτεον ειτε μη. Ως εγω, ϗ μονος νυν, αλλα και αει τοιαυτος, ως των ετων μηδενι αλλῳ πειθεσθαι η τω λογω ος αν μοι λογιζομενω βελτιϛος Φαινηται. τϗς δε Λογϗς ϗς εν τω εμπροσθεν ελεγον ου δυναμαι νον εκβαλειν επειδε μοι η τυχη γεγονεν. Αλλα σκεδον τι ομοισε Φαινονται μοι, και τοιαυτος πρεσβευω και τιμω ως και προτερον, &c. ΠΛΑΤ. ΚΡΙΤ.

* There is no occaſion here for methodiſed obſervations, and protracted periods. The former give a ſtiff air to the hiſtorian's compoſition. The latter fatigue inſtead of entertaining the reader. Comprehenſion and conciſe expreſſion are the two criteria by which thoughts that grow out of hiſtorial narration ought always to be characteriſed. When Livy has related at large a decree of the Athenian people againſt Philip, from whoſe reſentment they hoped to be protected by the Romans, he gives his own ſenſe of their conduct by

priety of ſentiment requires, that the orator ſhould fix upon ſuch motives and arguments

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by ſaying,—" Athenienſes quidem *literis, verbiſque quibus ſolis valent, bellum* adverſus Philippum gerebant." Dec. iv. lib. i. Theſe few words contain as much ſenſe as might be made to fill out a volume. They repreſent the low ſtate to which the powerful republic of Athens was reduced; and the term *bellum* particularly in the preſent connection, throws the ſtrongeſt ridicule on their procedure. Of a different kind from this is the following obſervation of one of the moſt judicious of Roman hiſtorians, on the funeral of Auguſtus. Yet it is interwoven in ſuch a manner into the body of his work, that this laſt would have ſeemed to be incomplete without it. " Die funeris, milites velut præſidio ſtetere, multum irridentibus qui ipſi viderint, quique a parentibus acceperant, diem illum crudi adhuc ſervitii & libertatis improſpere repetitæ, cum occiſus Dictator Cæſar, aliis peſſimum, aliis pulcherrimum facinus videretur: nunc ſenem principem longa potentia, proviſis etiam hæredum in rempublicam opibus, auxilio ſcilicet militari tuendum, ut ſepultura quieta foret." Annal. lib. i. This manner of laying circumſtances together hath an excellent effect in hiſtory. It carries back the reader upon the winding up of a ſcene, to the recollection of events that might have eſcaped his memory; and placeth theſe in ſuch a light as is at the ſame time agreeable and inſtructive. Let us take one other example of this propriety of ſen-

ments as he knows will make the moſt laſting impreſſion upon the audience to whom his diſcourſe is addreſſed; and that the whole ſhould be enforced by obſervations judiciouſly adapted to the nature of the ſubject, and to the circumſtances of the hearers *.—With regard to the poetic art indeed,

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timent from a modern hiſtorian. Voltaire ſpeaking of the adminiſtration of France under the duke of Orleans, obſerves, that the celebrated Syſtem of Law which ſeemed to threaten the ſtate with ruin, contributed in the event to ſupport and even enrich it. It gave an active ſpirit to the nation, occaſioned the revival of commerce, and gave birth to the India company, which had been ruined in the wars.

This ſenſible obſervation hath great propriety in this connection. It is indeed ſuggeſted naturally by the preceding account of things. But the effect of a civil war, and that of this *great game*, (as he juſtly calls it) upon the human mind, when viewed philoſophically as improving certain faculties of it, ſeems at the ſame time a new and inſtructive method of treating the ſubject, as ſuch conſiderations tend to enlarge our knowledge of human nature.

* It hath been often obſerved with truth, that the chriſtian religion affords a wider field to the orator, and propoſeth nobler and more animating motives to influence the conduct of mankind, than any other ſyſtem of principles whatever. Yet it muſt at the ſame time be

indeed, as it admits of much greater variety of Compoſition than any of the

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be acknowledged, that in *propriety of ſentiment*, conſidered as ariſing from an attention to the *peculiar circumſtances of the hearers*, the ſubjects on which ancient orators were led to expatiate ſuggeſted arguments more perſuaſive as being drawn from immediate exigencies, than could have ariſen from a plan of duty whoſe moral ſanctions were not inſtantly to take place. Thus Demoſthenes calling up to the Athenians the ghoſts of thoſe who fell at Marathon and Salamis, as formerly referred to; Tully invoking the Alban groves and altars polluted by the debauchery of Claudius; Manlius, when accuſed of treaſon before the Roman people, pointing to the Capitol, which in their own memory had been ſaved from deſtruction by his intrepidity; and Gracchus ſignificantly directing the eyes of his audience to the very ſpot that had been ſtained with the blood of his brother;—theſe it is obvious laid before their hearers motives of powerful and irreſiſtible energy. Vide Demoſthen. de Coron. Cicer. pro Milon. Liv. lib. vi. c. 20. and Cicer. de Orat. lib. iii. c. 56. On the other hand however, it ought to be obſerved at the ſame time, that if we conſider the motives of chriſtianity as operating indeed more univerſally, but leſs inſtantaneouſly than the former; it will follow that the chriſtian orator may evince a very ſuperior degree of judgment, by ſelecting from ſuch as occur to him thoſe that are beſt adapted to his purpoſe; and by applying them in that manner which he knows will have the ſtrongeſt and moſt permanent effect.

others it is more eaſy in moſt caſes to perceive the effects of this propriety of ſentiment, than to ſay particularly by what it it is conſtituted. Without however having recourſe to the various ſpecies of this art, it may be obſerved, that we always applaud the judgment of the writer, when we find moral and inſtructive ſentiments wrought into his performance, without either leading the reader from the ſubject, or breaking the unity of deſign *. In deſcriptive

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* In the Georgics of Virgil (a theme indeed naturally productive of moral obſervation) the reader whoſe mind is ſuſceptible of impreſſion from ſentiments that riſe out of a paſtoral ſubject, will find many of theſe introduced with the ſtricteſt propriety. To a man who had been diſappointed in purſuing the plans of ambition, how juſt muſt the following obſervation have appeared which the ſubject of the poet ſo obviouſly introduceth

Fortunatus et ille, Deos qui novit agreſtes,
Pana, Sylvanumque ſinem, Nymphaſque ſorores!
Illum non populi faſces, non purpura regum
Flexit,——
Non res Romanæ perituraque regna; neque ille
Aut doluit miſerans inopem, aut invidit habenti.

GEOR. lib. ii.

This

ſcriptive pieces particularly we view theſe as buſtoes diſpoſed artfully in variegated ſcenery, where they form agreeable and attractive decorations.

This propriety of ſentiment likewiſe conſtitutes one of the principal beauties of Thomſon's Seaſons; a work ſo univerſally read, that the ſelection of any particular example is rendered unneceſſary. One of the moſt ſtriking inſtances of this kind the author remembers to have met with, is in a little ode by Mr. Gray, beginning "Lo where the roſy-boſomed hours, &c." After having painted in rich and glowing imagery the inſect youth as on the wing,

Eager to taſte the honied ſpring,
And float amid the liquid noon, &c.

theſe images are applied with exquiſite propriety in the following moral reflection ariſing likewiſe immediately from the ſubject.

To contemplation's ſober eye
Such is the race of man;
And they that *creep*, and they that *fly*,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the *buſy* and the *gay*
But *flutter* thro' life's *little day*,
In Fortune's *varying colours* dreſs'd;
Bruſh'd by the hand of *rough miſchance*,
Or *chill'd* by age, their *airy dance*,
They leave in duſt to reſt. GRAY's Odes.

To a reader poſſeſſed of poetic feeling, this painting will need no illuſtration. To one who wants this ſenſibility, no illuſtration would be of uſe.

The

The underſtanding claims as a province peculiarly its own, the power of diſtinguiſhing any performance by this characteriſtic of propriety. It effectuates this purpoſe by giving cloſe attention as well to the nature of objects, as to the juſtneſs of their diſpoſition; and by taking into its eſtimate whatever is neceſſary to render the exhibition adequate and complete. Thus it is that the ſentiment in hiſtorical narration riſes ſo naturally out of the detail, as if it made a part of, and was neceſſary to ſum it up. Thus a clear relation is perceived to take place in the diſquiſitions of philoſophy, betwixt the obſervations or arguments, and the end, whether an ultimate or ſubordinate one, which theſe are adduced to bring about. In the firſt caſe, a judicious and of conſequence comprehenſive ſurvey of events includes thoſe ſentiments that either render the narration inſtructive, or ſerve to connect one part of the ſubject with another; in both which caſes their propriety is obvious. In the laſt inſtance where narration takes no place, it is the power of underſtanding likewiſe

that

that by permiting nothing to paſs that is either frivolous or unappropriated, renders the whole an object of rational approbation.

With regard to the arts of eloquence and poetry, where an ampler range is opened to imagination; can any reaſon be aſſigned why effects of *the ſame kind* ſhould not likewiſe be conſidered as derived from the ſame original? And does it not indicate a defect of this faculty, when theſe are wholly overlooked as *ſignatures of it*, merely perhaps becauſe they appear in a ſpecies of richer and more diverſified Compoſition? At many times indeed we may venture to affirm, that a ſingle thought thrown out at once, and ſeeming to riſe out of the ſubject by a kind of new creation, will diſcover to a mind *capable of taking in its whole force*, greater extent of judgment and deeper inſight into the ſprings by which the mind is moſt powerfully actuated, than thoſe elaborate reſearches by which truth is elucidated, after carrying on a progreſſive and complicated detail.

This

This attention to propriety of ſentiment as the teſt of underſtanding, will ſhow us that the opinion, however univerſally prevalent, is fallacious, that the diſtinguiſhing criterion of this power is *ſtrength* and *juſtneſs* of argument. In order to judge properly of this point, we muſt make allowances for the various ſubjects of ſpeculation, each requiring to be treated in a manner peculiar to itſelf. As florid epithets therefore, and pompous declamation, would be juſtly looked upon in a diſcourſe profeſſedly philoſophical to be evidences of a defective underſtanding; ſo a ſeries of reaſoning uniformly ſupported in a piece (which as far as any ſubject can be treated in this manner) ought to be purely pathetic or deſcriptive, indicates in fact a deficiency of judgment as much as the former. The difference only is, that in the one caſe an author diſcovers that defect in the execution of his ſubject, which in the other is conſpicuous from his choice of it.

To the criteria abovementioned as characteriſtical univerſally of the mental power, whoſe office we are here conſidering, we may add

add as the laſt indication, that it is this faculty which makes the expreſſion bear a juſt relation to the ſentiment in any ſpecies of Compoſition; and that gives accuracy in the application of images to thoſe objects which they are brought to illuſtrate. The original invention of theſe laſt is unqueſtionably owing to imagination. We cannot however have a ſurer proof in any particular inſtance of the ſuperiority of this faculty above that of reaſon, than when we obſerve images to be indiſcriminately ſcattered through a work without regard to the thoughts as not requiring to be thus illuſtrated; or when we find theſe diſcordant to their objects, and, like ſhreds of tapeſtry before the piece is completed, exhibiting only a ſingle limb, or fragment of the figure, inſtead of ſetting the whole before the eye in its natural proportion. From that invariable attention to arrangement and ſymmetry, which we have obſerved to characteriſe reaſon, we may lay it down as a principle, that whatever errors a heated imagination may give occaſion to in the application of images as conſiſting

ſifting of foreign and unappropriated circumſtances, yet we ſhall ſeldom or never find a *judicious* author employing theſe when they are obviouſly inadequate, or when by recurring too frequently they pall upon the mind, and throw an air of obſcurity on the piece.

It is by the concurrence of the circumſtances thus enumerated and explained that Compoſition is rendered *correct*. This important character therefore obtains perfection in conſequence of a ſteady and aſſiduous exertion of judgment. The degree in which it ought to obtain, the attention it ſhould exerciſe, and its effect in general on the art of which we treat here, will be conſidered in a ſubſequent branch of the work.

Thus we have endeavoured to lay before the reader ſome account of the extenſive province aſſigned to the great faculty by which man is diſtinguiſhed from inferior creatures, in the various departments of Compoſition. The reader will obſerve that in our remarks on this ſubject, we have kept in ſight the operations of this faculty

faculty conſidered apart from the others; that effects derived from *reaſon alone*, may be clearly diſcriminated from thoſe that owe their origin either to ſome other mental quality, or to a combination of all. By purſuing this courſe, we propoſe to accompliſh a beneficial purpoſe both to an author and his critic. The firſt, when he is meditating a deſign, may judge from the criteria that are here laid down as ſhowing the prevalence of underſtanding, how far his own is adequate to it, and in what points it may be deficient. The laſt, when by having viewed the faculties of the mind in this light, he knows how to put every thing to its *proper account*, will be unembarraſſed in the whole of his procedure; and ſhould the obſervations on this branch of the preſent ſubject be found to have propriety, may found his deciſion on ſurer evidences, than he who takes a general and indiſcriminate ſurvey.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of the influence of Imagination in Compoſition.

IMAGINATION, or the inventive faculty as it is denominated, we have already defined as employed in Compoſition, to be that "which ſtrikes out happy imitations, forms original aſſemblages of ideas; and thus ſupplies the materials of thoſe juſt and beautiful illuſtrations, which at the ſame time improve the *expreſſion* in this art, and heighten the effect of ſentiment *." It is proper to obſerve before we enter particularly into this ſubject, that this intellectual power cannot be viewed preciſely in the ſame light as the former; which we contemplated as ſingle and independent of every other. The looſe and unconnected effuſions of fancy wrought into no form by the controul of reaſon, can only be viewed as the extravagant ravings of a madman. We propoſe therefore here to follow as cloſely as poſſible the track of

* Sect. I.

this

this excentric faculty; and to point out effects of which it is ultimately the cauſe:—but, as we ſhall not always take notice of the influence exerted by the underſtanding in rendering theſe effects the objects of *rational* entertainment, the reader himſelf muſt ſeparate the operations of theſe powers from each other, in which he may receive direction from the preceding obſervations.

We have in the courſe of this work frequently diſtinguiſhed imagination by the deſignation of the *inventive power* *, that its

* A critic of the preſent age endeavours to make a diſtinction betwixt *invention* and *imagination*, which he ſays, "though nearly allied *in their ſignification*, yet are "ſomewhat different from each other." Invention he defines to be "the *faculty* of diſcovering *certain relations* "among various objects, from whence we form a new "and beautiful aſſociation of ideas. Imagination is "the faculty of illuſtrating and embelliſhing thoſe "ideas by new, apt, and ſtriking images and figures." —I am entirely of this gentleman's mind with regard to the neceſſity of giving clear definitions of the terms we employ; without which it is true that we may "cavil "without end, and create confuſion inſtead of *begetting* "conviction."

its operations may be eaſily and clearly known from theſe of any other intellectual endowment.

" conviction." See Ruffhead's Life of Pope, p. 447, 448. But by a want of preciſion in the preſent caſe, I am afraid that his own definitions give riſe to ſome part of thoſe effects which he ſo freely and juſtly cenſures. " Invention he ſays is the *faculty* of diſcovering certain " relations, &c." The term *faculty* employed here, naturally ſuggeſts the idea of ſome intellectual power different from thoſe with which we are acquainted, as neceſſarily productive of certain conſequences. It ought therefore to have been analiſed; i. e. the author ſhould have ſhown, either in what reſpects it is diſtinct from the others, or in what manner it is conſtituted by their union. Neither of theſe however has this writer attempted, further than by telling us, that we diſcover by it *certain* relations, &c. *Certain* relations! What relations? Thoſe that enable us " to form a *new* and " *beautiful* aſſociation of ideas." In an aſſociation of ideas recommended by *novelty*, we have ſhown in the preceding ſection, that the underſtanding or judgment may upon ſome occaſions be *ſolely* employed. See p. 28, &c. With regard to the *beauty* of ſuch aſſociation, I would aſk in what manner is this character conſtituted? Does it lie in the juſt combination, and methodical arrangement of ideas? To confer according to our author's own deciſion the province of judgment. See p. 449. From theſe obſervations it would ſeem, that by the faculty here termed invention, our author means that of reaſon, or underſtanding. But this he will

endowment. As this term muſt occur ſo frequently when we treat of imagination, it

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will not permit us to ſuppoſe. For enumerating in the very next page the qualities that conſtitute genius, he mentions invention and judgment as faculties perfectly diſtinct from each other. Again,—is this beauty conſtituted by the novelty, *aptitude*, and vivacity of the colours with which ideas are decorated?—No.—Theſe characters are ſtamped on Compoſition by imagination which it is his buſineſs to diſtinguiſh from invention.—Since then this extraordinary faculty is diſtinct both from judgment and imagination ſeparately viewed, does it ariſe from the union of both powers?—Neither is this the caſe according to this gentleman's idea of the term, for in the enumeration above referred to, he takes notice of invention as a faculty by which the poet is enabled to perceive the relations of objects, and to form a ſtriking and intereſting union of theſe, p. 449, before he aſſigns the provinces either of imagination or of reaſon in forming his character.—Yet in the ſame page, after having aſcribed to invention a power of placing objects in a certain "ſtriking union," he mentions this "ſtriking union" as the effect not of invention, but of "ſolid and correct judgment." This ingenious gentleman (in whoſe work, notwithſtanding theſe inadvertencies, there is much juſt and valuable criticiſm) has embarraſſed himſelf in his account of this characteriſtic of genius, by giving the deſignation of a *faculty* of the mind to ſomething that is only to be conſidered as indicating its exiſtence. Invention is not

it will throw light on its various modes of exertion, if we endeavour to determine particularly the meaning of the phraſe.

Invention

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itſelf an intellectual power. It is an effect ſometimes derived from reaſon, when principles already known are laid together in ſuch a manner, as to give riſe to ſome concluſion in which there is at the ſame time both novelty and truth: ſometimes it proceeds from a warm imagination, as when unuſual and ſtriking aſſemblages of ideas are preſented to the mind; or even when known truths are placed in a light remarkably attractive by new and peculiarly happy illuſtrations. It is an effect of diſcernment conſtituted by the union of both theſe powers, when judgment is conſpicuous at the ſame time in the methodiſed arrangement of ideas, and imagination in their originality, and manner of being ſet off to advantage. This laſt however is denominated with peculiar propriety the *inventive faculty*, becauſe its combinations being more uncommon than thoſe of the underſtanding, and *ſeeming* often to have been effectuated by a glance of thought, we aſcribe to imagination a kind of creative energy of which the former when left to itſelf appears not to participate. It is to this power of the mind likewiſe as we ſhall ſhow afterwards, that diſcernment owes its quickneſs of perception, as well as its choice of extraordinary means. That its province in Compoſition is much more extenſive than that which we have ſeen preſcribed to it by this author of embelliſhing ideas by new, and ſtriking

figures,

Invention as a general deſignation is applied to every thing in which there is novelty. Fancy therefore viewed as the parent of invention, is conſidered as the original ſource of thoſe new and ſtriking aſſemblages or imitations which a mind endowed with any large proportion of it is ſaid to *create*. But what are we to underſtand by this laſt epithet? The explanation of it will include that of the other, and is indeed the more neceſſary, as terms of this kind not properly underſtood when applied to the human mind, are apt to ſuggeſt to an unintelligent reader a ſenſe which the authors never meant to convey by them.—In the moſt abſtracted ſenſe of this word as relating to diſcoveries purely *original*, of which the ſenſes receive no patterns, we muſt be convinced at once, that with regard to man, it can have no ſignificance or propriety whatever. The ideas infinitely diverſified that are conveyed to us by the ſenſes; or that ariſe from the vari-

figures, we ſhall endeavour to evince at large when we conſider the various manners in which its energy is diſplayed.

ous lights in which the mind contemplates its own operations,—theſe are indeed by what we term a plaſtic imagination aſſociated, compounded, and diverſified at pleaſure. Diſcernment, in the proper acceptation of that term, is diſcovered in ſeizing remote points of reſemblance betwixt objects that have no apparent ſimiliarity; and in the elucidation of truth from topics which the man of mere fancy, or of mere reaſon might wholly overlook. But in the whole of this proceſs, the originality obviouſly reſults from the manner in which objects are ſelected and put together, ſo as to form upon the whole an unuſual combination; though theſe when ſeparately viewed may each of them be ſuch as the mind hath formerly been habituated to contemplate.

From this power of placing known truths in ſuch points of view as make a forcible and permanent impreſſion, thoſe diſcoveries ariſe in which philoſophical inveſtigation is made uſe of. Here the mind having conſidered the moſt probable means of obtaining a certain purpoſe, lays down a few

few ſimple and obvious truths from which it forms more compounded exhibitions in a proceſs cloſely ſuperintended by the faculty that eſtabliſheth methodical arrangement. Ideas that are familiar to the mind when ſeparated from each other, impreſs ſome truth that is new to it, in conſequence of a certain peculiar diſpoſition; and impart in ſuch aſſociation truths that arreſt not attention more ſtrongly by their originality, (if that term may here be applied with juſtice) than they may be ſubſervient to edification in conſequence of their comprehenſive nature and importance. By varying a little a ſimilar train of familiar perceptions we ſhall eaſily comprehend the preciſe meaning of the term Invention when applied to the various branches of ſcientifical enquiry; and the different ſenſe in which it is taken from the epithet *creative* which diſtinguiſheth other ſpecies of Compoſition. Thus in every kind of analogical reaſoning, experience ſupplies the materials upon which the theory proceeds. We are indeed ſtruck in the proſecution of reaſoning conducted on this plan, when

an obvious relation is diſcovered to take place betwixt things that appeared to be wholly different. But the ſatisfaction derived from ſuch an enquiry ariſeth as we find upon reviewing the proceſs, not from any originality of the objects themſelves, but merely from the novelty of that ſituation in which theſe are expoſed to view.

Thus far, having followed out the firſt idea of invention as conſtituted by any exhibition in which there is *novelty*, we may aſcribe it with propriety to the philoſopher who conducts to ſome unexpected concluſion a ſeries of arguments or to the orator, who fixeth on the moſt appoſite topics of perſuaſion *. Theſe however, though ſtanding

* There appears to be a remarkable difference of opinion betwixt one of the firſt of ancient and of modern writers with regard to the meaning of the term Invention. Cicero in his work entitled De Inventione, of which only one half remains at preſent, conſiders this as the principal character of an orator. Bacon, on the contrary, will not admit that he who fixeth on the beſt arguments hath any title to the deſignation of an inventor. " Inventio argumentorum (ſays he) Inventio *proprie* non eſt. *Invenire* enim eſt *ignota* detegere, non

ſtanding high in their diſtinct profeſſions, and juſtly eſteemed as men of genius, yet occupy only a ſecondary rank as inventors, when compared with him, who preſents every moment new aſſemblages of objects to the mind, illuminated with the richeſt colouring; and to whoſe genius we apply the deſignation of *creative* in conſequence of ideas riſing as it would ſeem ſpontane-

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non ante cognita recipere aut revocare." De Augment. Scient. lib. v. c. 3. But the ſentiments of theſe upon the preſent ſubject may be eaſily reconciled. Should it be allowed that the choice and application of arguments may diſcover no eminent ſhare of invention, yet it is undoubtedly ſhown when theſe arguments are brought to enforce ſome new propoſition. This is obviouſly the "ignota detegere" which he ſpeaks of, and its author is unqueſtionably poſſeſſed of invention. The ſelection and application of topics of perſuaſion in eloquence denominate the ſame character, and it is this which Cicero calls the principal part of eloquence. Another ancient writer conſiders not only invention in general, but various degrees of it as diſcovered here. Αλλ' επει των ωρωβληματων ειδη ωοικιλα, και των ωραγματων αι ζητησεις διαφοροι, ωοικιλας, και τας ΕΥΡΕΣΕΙΣ ωαραδωσομεν ωσε τεθεισης υποθεσεως, αυτικα ειδεναι εφ' ο τρεπτεον εξιν εις ευρεσιν της ωροκαταςασεως τεχνικην. ΕΡΜΟΓΕΝ. περι ΕΥΡΕΣ. βιβ. β. τμημ. Α.

ouſly

ouſly from the thought of the writer, and falling like the rude materials of the univerſe into beautiful arrangement. It is in this proceſs that we are to look for the great principle of *poetic imitation*. In the ſtrict ſenſe of that word, the poet is no more a creator or maker than the hiſtorian or philoſopher. But his imagination is ſtruck with expreſſions in the various objects contemplated by it, which it poſſeſſeth likewiſe the power of painting in the moſt vivid colours. When many of theſe are brought together, the ſame faculty that perceived them at firſt, aſſociates them in a manner altogether unuſual. To theſe aſſociations we give the deſignation ORIGINAL; and to the power which produced them, that of INVENTIVE or CREATIVE *.

From

* As this curious and important branch of the ſubject may appear to require a fuller diſcuſſion than we have here had occaſion to afford it in the text, we ſhall here throw together a few additional obſervations on it. Ariſtotle not only conſiders every ſpecies of poetry as derived from imitation, but he points out the moſt diſtinguiſhing branches of the art, as taking their riſe from that bias of the character. Σεμνοτεροι τας καλας εμιμουντο

From the whole reflection will point out to us two diſtinct cauſes in the mind, from which

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εμιμουντο πραξεις, &c. οι δε Ευτελεστεροι τα των φαυλων, πρωτου ψογους ποιουντες, &c. περι ΠΟΙΗΤ. κεφ. Δ. Purſuing this train of thought a little further, we may obſerve, that in the ſcale of genius, thoſe who are denominated makers or inventors are ſuch as copy immediately from nature, as their great and perfect original. Thoſe who poſſeſs a very conſiderable ſhare of this character without ever riſing to a level with the firſt, are ſuch as ſometimes ſtrike out new figures in the contemplation of this conſummate pattern, and ſometimes content themſelves with beautifying and improving upon the inventions of others. The laſt claſs, wholly confined to the latter ſpecies of imitation are diſqualified by any art to reach the former; and are therefore never ſuppoſed to be diſtinguiſhed by *original merit.* To the two firſt of theſe the term inventive may be applied with propriety, if we conſider it as a criterion by which the higheſt degree of genius may be diſtinguiſhed from an inferior, or very moderate proportion of it; in which caſe he who ſtands in the loweſt rank appears only as a ſervile and ſecondary imitator. It is however in ſtrict truth improper to apply the word imitation merely to a few of the arts; when upon taking a more enlarged view of things, we ſhall find ſome particular ſpecies of imitation characteriſing every branch of Compoſition. Thus the philoſopher in his moſt abſtracted reſearches evidently diſcovers this principle,

which every ſpecies of originality is ultimately to be traced. The one is, its power of forming ſuch various, new, and ſtriking

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ciple, when he delineates the forms either of external or of internal beauty, from that perfect model which is the object of his ſenſes, or from that image which he perceives to be imprinted on the mind. In copying likewiſe the expreſſion of any intellectual power, we fall naturally into ſome mode of imitation. This becomes immediately perceptible when the effects of any paſſion are to be repreſented, as the expreſſion is then *tinctured* (if we may adopt that epithet) with the colour required to predominate; and the images are rendered as ſignificant as poſſible of the object to be deſcribed. A kind of ſecondary imitation we may obſerve to prevail among the ſeveral arts, whoſe idioms being mutually transfuſed give peculiar beauty and energy to each other. Thus an eminent ancient hiſtorian ſhows the origin of rhetoric upon this principle, and explains in a very ingenious manner the ſteps by which it was carried forward. Πρωτισα γαρ η ωοιητικη κατασκευη ωαρηλθεν εις το μεσον και ευδοκιμησεν. Ειτα εκεινον ΜΙΜΟΥΜΕΝΟΙ λυσαντες το μετρον, τ'αλλα δε φυλαξαντες τα ωοιητικα συνεγραψαν οι ωερι Καδμον, ωερι Φερεκυδην, και Εκαταιον. Ειτοι οι υσερον αφαιρουντες αει τι των τοιυτων εις το νυν ειδος κατηγαγον ως αν' απο Υψους τινος. ΣΤΡΑΒ. βιβ. Α. We ſhall have occaſion to ſhow afterwards that this beautiful ſpecies of imitation prevailed much more among the ancients than it is permitted to do in modern times.

combinations

combinations of truths univerſally acknowledged as open at laſt unexpected avenues of knowledge. The other is its propenſity to imitate upon all occaſions the different characters and appearances of nature; whether viewed as exhibiting the moſt beautiful external ſcenery; or throwing expreſſions infinitely diverſified into the characters of men. In proportion as its perception of theſe laſt extends to remote circumſtances and connections; and ſuch as are leaſt perceptible, the marks of originality are rendered ſtill more conſpicuous; and in conſequence of the *novelty* which theſe give to a performance the imitative powers of the author acquire the denomination of invention.

That this power of imitation is ſomething diſtinct from that which we denominate the reaſoning faculty, it will require little attention to evince. The difference muſt indeed be rendered obvious from this ſingle conſideration; that an eminent ſhare of the firſt of theſe often diſtinguiſheth men, who are void of the laſt, at leaſt with regard to its higheſt ſcene of operation.

Thus

Thus we can eaſily conceive that a man may be capable of tracing with great accuracy effects from a cauſe, or, vice verſa, a cauſe from effects, who is yet wholly diſqualified, upon viewing the external beauties of nature, to paint theſe by certain happy and exquiſite ſtrokes of imitations. It does not indeed follow that he who poſſeſſeth this imitative talent may not likewiſe be qualified to exerciſe that of reaſoning juſtly. But an inſtance in which it appears that one of theſe is disjoined from the other, clearly ſhows that they are eſſentially different. Now if this is the caſe, as argumentation carried on properly to accompliſh a certain purpoſe indicates the exerciſe of reaſon; ſo an imitation happily executed can ariſe only from that power to which we give the name of imagination. But it hath been already ſhown that to certain imitative beauties we aſſign the appellation of *original* expreſſions. It follows therefore that the faculty from which theſe are derived may be characteriſed peculiarly by the epithet *inventive*.

Applying

Applying therefore this deſignation to it, let us enquire what ſpheres are appropriated to it in the province of Compoſition. We propoſe to conſider its operations as regarding the images, the incidents, the ſentiments, or the characters that occur in the various ſpecies of this art. In one or other of the views opened to us by theſe, it will appear that we contemplate imagination; and we ſuppoſe it then only to be predominant in the higheſt degree, when the ſeparate teſtimonies of its exiſtence act in vigorous combination.

I. Under the general deſignation of images, we mean here to comprehend not only thoſe ſignificant alluſions by which a particular thought is placed vividly before the mind, but every ſpecies of *illuſtration* by which ſentiments either acquire the advantage of being clearly diſplayed, or of making a forcible and laſting impreſſion. Of theſe there are two kinds, each of which hath its peculiar importance. The firſt takes place when an event or action of eſſential conſequence is completely diſplayed by ſome ſignificant and appropriated

image,

image, drawn from external objects, and purſued through a detail of circumſtances. The ſecond kind is conſtituted when maxims or ſentiments of importance are explained by appoſite metaphors, or are impreſſed on the mind by ſuitable examples. It is principally in the higher branches of poetry that we are to look for the firſt of theſe. In epic particularly where *admiration* is almoſt conſtantly to be excited by holding up ſome ſtandard of conſummate excellence, it is at the ſame time neceſſary, that the principal character ſhould be expoſed in a variety of lights; and that every circumſtance relating to it ſhould add ſtrength to the paſſion which ought to riſe higher as the author proceeds. This great effect is wholly to be aſcribed to the grandeur of thoſe ſublime images by which every object is ſucceſſively exalted. The ſolemnity with which theſe are introduced, the circumſtantial manner in which they are diſplayed, and our own propenſity to extend our idea of the object until it is equalled with the illuſtration; theſe united circumſtances operate ſo powerfully on the mind,

as to ſuſpend as it were the influence of reaſon. Tranſactions thus deſcribed become in fact ſo deeply intereſting as to awaken in us the ſame paſſions that would have ſeized immediate ſpectators of the ſcene *.

In

* "On ne peut reüſſir dans le ſtyle elevé du genre ſublime qu'on ne ſoit entierement perſuadé que ce ſtyle ce forme de choſes qu'on a dire des grandes images qu'on s'en fait; & de l'elevation du genie, plus que de celle de l'expreſſion, de l'eclat de paroles & de cette attirail de periphraſes recherchées." Rap. Reflex. ſur l'Eloq. tom. ii. p. 37. This ſentiment a reader of taſte will conſider as much more juſt and noble than that of another critic of the ſame nation, who ſeems to conſider an exact conformity in every point betwixt the image and the object to be illuſtrated, as indiſpenſibly neceſſary at all times to conſtitute juſt compoſition. Boſſu du Poeme Epique, liv. vi. chap. 3. Here our critic takes a very frigid and defective view of his ſubject. A great genius, when his mind is filled with ſublime conceptions, will not even think of keeping up this rigid conformity, by which he might obtain the praiſe of correctneſs, at the expence of being charged with coldneſs and inſipidity. When an illuſtration at ſuch times correſponds to the object in ſome remarkable circumſtance, we not only allow the writer to throw in others which have no ſuch immediate connection with it, but we conſider theſe as

In every ſpecies of didactic compoſition it is obvious that this ſtyle of exalted imagery would be wholly improper, and indeed unnatural. A judicious writer will

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the exuberance of an imagination inexhauſtible in materials; and ſhewing that it poſſeſſeth a larger proportion of theſe than neceſſity requires. Of this kind the reader will meet with many ſtriking examples in the Iliad, the Paradiſe Loſt, and the Gieruſalemme Liberata. We may however, obſerve, that though this free uſe of the preſent figure obtains among the moſt eminent poets, yet it is not meant to affirm that an image *exactly* correſponding to its original will fail, even in this ſpecies of compoſition, of making a forcible and adequate impreſſion. This conformity ought particularly to be ſtudied when ſeveral different figures are collected into one group, and the illuſtration is applied ſucceſſively to each. When Æneas is deſcribed as aſcending to the top of his father's houſe to learn whence aroſe the tumult in the city, how ſtrongly does the following image ſet before our eyes the man, the place, and the ſcene that broke out upon him!

In ſegetem veluti cùm flamma furentibus auſtris
Incidit, aut rapidus montano flumine torrens
Sternit agros, ſternit ſata læta, boumque labores,
Precipiteſque trahit ſylvas:—ſtupet inſcius alto,
Accipiens ſonitum, ſaxi de vertice paſtor.

Æneid. lib. ii.

therefore

therefore have recourſe here to the other kind of illuſtration which conſiſts of employing metaphor or example. It ought to be obſerved that though the mind willingly ſubmits upon ſome occaſions to the illuſion of fancy; yet this only happens when it is thoroughly captivated by a ſeries of intereſting events; and rather than loſe the pleaſure of peruſal, we are willing to look upon theſe (if we may thus expreſs it) as *momentary* realities. This impoſition is rendered more or leſs effectual, as the illuſtrations participate in a greater or leſs degree of ſtrength, beauty, and variety. By theſe means attention is very forcibly arreſted by an event otherwiſe too inconſiderable to have at all attracted it; as obſervations in the ſame manner which might have been otherwiſe overlooked, by being thus powerfully inculcated, become ſubſervient to the purpoſe of enlarging our knowledge of mankind.

In the province of ſcience, where criticiſm exerciſeth more rigid ſeverity, the inventive power is principally beneficial, when, under the direction of underſtand-

ing, it ſuggeſts a mode of expreſſion ſo happily and juſtly metaphorical, as conveys peculiar energy to philoſophical diſquiſition, and placeth hiſtorical tranſactions in the moſt ſtriking points of view. We muſt diſtinguiſh here betwixt *examples* which refer to a whole ſeries of obſervation taken together, and metaphors which relate wholly to one part or object in this ſeries. This will be beſt underſtood from particular inſtances. It is the purpoſe of Cicero in the dialogue entitled the Dream of Scipio, to impreſs the belief of the immortality of the ſoul In order to effectuate this purpoſe, the great Africanus is introduced as addreſſing one of his greateſt deſcendents, and at the ſame time that he mentions the evidence of this truth, as powerfully exemplifying the happineſs of the bleſſed by compariſon with the higheſt enjoyment of mortals. With this view he points to Carthage * the ſcene of future

* "Oſtendebat autem Carthaginem de excelſo et pleno ſtellarum, illuſtri et claro quodam loco." Somn. Scipion.

triumph

triumph to the perſon whom he addreſſed, and acquaints him of happineſs incomparably higher than that which may ariſe from this conqueſt, to be enjoyed in a future ſtate *. He proceeds to convey an higher idea of this happineſs by making it to ariſe from the contemplation of the UNIVERSE, that *magnificent temple* † (as he nobly calls it) of the Deity; in compariſon of which the world itſelf is a point, and the Roman empire altogether, an almoſt imperceptible atom!—Every reader muſt be ſenſible of the advantage which the philoſophical ſentiments of this dialogue acquire from being exemplified in ſo exalted a ſtyle of imagery.

Metaphors, or ſhort compariſons as theſe may be denominated, are applied indeed

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* "Sic habeto: omnibus qui patriam conſervaverint, adjuverint, auxerint, certum eſſe in cælo ac definitum locum, ubi beati ævo ſempiterno fruantur. Imo ii vivunt qui ex corporis vinculis tanquam ex carcere evolaverunt: veſtra vero quæ dicitur vita, mors eſt." Id. ibid.

† "DEUS IS, cujus templum eſt *omne hoc quod conſpicis.*"

to particular objects, inſtead of thus illuſtrating ſentiments that ſtand in connection with each other. Yet their effect when properly applied, is ſuch as every reader poſſeſſed of ſenſibility muſt feel as highly intereſting.—When Socrates, in his laſt diſcourſe, is laying open the myſteries of his philoſophy, he informs his diſciples that above the heaven in which the ſtars are placed, there is another region denominated the æther. The earth we inhabit he repreſents as a kind of ſediment drawn from the other, like thoſe groſs particles that fall to the bottom when duſt is ſprinkled on a fine fluid. We, he obſerves, who inhabit this groſs region are ſo little ſenſible of it, that we fancy ourſelves to live in the pureſt one; "in the ſame manner as per-
"ſons ſuppoſed to inhabit the bottom of
"the ſea might judge that ſurface through
"which they ſee the ſun and ſtars, to be
"the heavens; and having never been
"able to raiſe themſelves above it, are ig-
"norant that we inhabit a purer and
"higher region than theirs, and meet

"with

" with none to give them information *." Here the ſentiment of the philoſopher is ſtrikingly and aptly conveyed by an image correſponding to one object in every circumſtance.

A temperate uſe of this figure produceth likewiſe an happy effect in hiſtorical narration, where an author of genius is naturally led into it by the recital of ſome momentous tranſaction. His imagination catcheth fire from the incident he relates; and while he is ſtudying to clothe it in ſuitable language, ſuggeſts to him an adequate image. Thus deſcribing a mob pre-

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* Ημας ουν οικουντας εν τοις κοιλοις αυτης λελησθεναι και οιεσθαι ανω επι της γης οικειν. Ωσπερ ει τις εν μεσω τω ωυθμενι τυ ωελαγους οικων, οιοιτο τε επι της θαλαττης οικειν, και δια τυ υδατος ορων τον ηλιον και τα αλλα αστρα, την θαλατταν ηγοιτο ουρανον ειναι· Δια δε βραδυτητα τε, και ασθενειαν, μηδεπωποτε επι τα ακρα της θαλαττης αφιγμενος, μηδε εωρακως ειη εκδυς και ανακυψας εκ της θαλαττης εις τον ενθαδε τοπον οσα καθαρωτερος και καλλιων τυγχανει ων τυ ωαρα σφισιν, μηδε αλλυ ακηκοως ειη τυ εωρακοτος. ΠΛΑΤΩΝ. ΦΑΙΔ. κεφ. νη.

cipitate and furious in all its motions, he ſeizeth the idea of a torrent ſwelled with the ſtorms of winter *. The array of an army on march ſomewhat diſordered by inequality of motion is with great elegance and propriety compared to the ſwelling of a billow of the ſea †. A prince naturally of good diſpoſitions, but eaſily thrown into paſſion, to the ocean ſerene at times, but apt to be agitated by every breath of wind ‡. A hiſtorian may even

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* Ο θεει τε εμπεσων τα πραγματα ανευ νοϑ, χειμαῤῥω ποταμω ικελος. ΗΡΟΔΟΤ. Θαλ.

† ΞΕΝΟΦ. περι Κυρ. p. 77.

‡ ΗΡΟΔΟΤ. Ευτερ. To the metaphors here mentioned we may ſubjoin, as one of the happieſt and moſt beautiful illuſtrations that is to be met with, one that is made uſe of by the celebrated Lucretia Gonzaga to a learned man who complained of his poverty.—"Eſſendo voi (ſays ſhe) perſona dotta, mi maraviglio che di ſi ſtrana maniera vi attriſtiate par la povertà:—quaſi non ſappiate la vita dei povere eſſer ſimile ad una navagatione preſſo il lito; & quella de ricchi non eſſer differente da coloro, che ſi ritrovano in mare. A gli uni è facile gittar la ſune in terra, & condur la nave a ſicuro liogo, & a gli altri e ſummamente difficile." Lettres di L. Gonzaga, p. 215.

ſometimes

ſometimes uſe the ſublime images of poetry, as we ſhall ſhow afterwards, either when his mind is exalted by the greatneſs of an event; when he is drawing an illuſtrious character; or when certain remarkable tranſactions require to be exhibited with ſtrength and vivacity of colouring. In all theſe caſes it would be uſeleſs to attempt proving that it is the faculty of imagination which ſeizeth the illuſtration, as it is judgment that applies it. Both theſe facts are admitted on all ſides.

II. From contemplating the inventive power as the fountain of beautiful illuſtration, we are next to conſider it as exerting eminent influence in the *invention of incidents*. This laſt effect we may view as indicating immediately the prevalence of fancy, without whoſe continued operation we cannot ſuppoſe it at any time to take place. It is conſtituted by no very difficult, but by a very ſtriking effort of this faculty of the mind, calling up either fictitious perſonages, or ſuch as receive conſiderable heightening from its *creative* pencil; and adapting to each a ſeries of events, from

from whoſe novelty, variety, and importance we commonly judge of the degree in which imagination is conferred. This amuſing, ingenious, and inchanting exerciſe of fancy, forms, though not perhaps the moſt ſublime, yet by far the moſt various and agreeable lights in which we find it diſplayed. In following out theſe, the mind is loſt in a kind of ideal labyrinth; in which the ſame power that ſuggeſted the incidents to the author, takes cognizance of theſe principally, and excites the moſt pleaſing ſenſations to the perſon who peruſeth his performance.

We ſhall not, therefore, form an inadequate idea of the invention of incidents, if we conſider theſe as indications of an imagination various, flexible, excurſive; capable of conſiderable extent of comprehenſion, and poſſeſſing a power of working up into the moſt attractive ſhapes, materials ſupplied by experience, and of forming unuſual combinations. But we ſhall be miſtaken if we conſider this criterion of genius (unleſs perhaps in ſome very rare inſtances) as indicating the greatneſs,

neſs, ſublimity, or even exuberance of that power from which it takes its riſe. This laſt obſervation will appear perhaps extraordinary to many readers at firſt view; becauſe as there is no characteriſtic of imagination more obvious to every man than that of contriving a complicated ſeries of events; ſo, with the bulk of mankind, whatever implies excellence in the only ſphere of exertion which they have been accuſtomed to appropriate to this quality, is naturally ſuppoſed to diſcover its predominance not only in the greateſt extent, but in the higheſt degree. Reflection however will lead us to make a wide diſtinction between theſe objects. But in order to render this thoroughly comprehenſible it will be neceſſary to enter into the ſubject more particularly.

The incidents of any work conſidered as the immediate offspring of imagination, may be viewed either as means of arreſting attention by their variety, novelty, and agreeable arrangement; or as circumſtances that upon ſome occaſions aſtoniſh and exalt the mind by that grandeur and

ſublimity

ſublimity of which they are viewed as indications. In the firſt of theſe views it is obvious, that if we judge a *great* imagination to be characteriſed by the complicated incidents that it works into a fable, we ſhall then be led to admire the authors of the *old romance* much more than theſe of the Iliad, the Æneid, or Odyſſey. For the former have varied their narration with a detail of imminent dangers, fortunate eſcapes, unexpected interviews, ſurprizing revolutions, ſucceſsful temerity, and reſolute enterprize; to which in the writings of the others (the Odyſſey itſelf not excepted) we meet with nothing of this kind in all reſpects adequate. Upon the ſame principle the Orlando Furioſo might be preferred equally both to the one and other, diſtinguiſhed as it is by ſo amazing a ſeries of ſtupendous events, that the mind is loſt among them as in a labyrinth, and cannot diſentangle the parts of ſo complicated a plan.

It will ſerve however to convince us that no very eminent ſhare of imagination is required to effectuate this purpoſe if

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we reflect that a compariſon of the works formerly mentioned with the Iliad, &c. will induce us to judge either that their authors poſſeſſed but an inferior proportion of imagination, or that the irregularity with which it appears to have operated, is wholly unaccountable and extraordinary. For if we lay it down as a principle, that the invention of incidents is always the criterion of a vigorous imagination, it will then follow, that a faculty which is deemed equal at one time to the accompliſhment of a noble and intereſting purpoſe, ought likewiſe to be equal to another ariſing from the ſame cauſe; and demanding it is ſuppoſed an exertion no higher than the former. Should we judge therefore the invention of characters to demand no greater effort of the faculty above-mentioned than is diſplayed in the preſent caſe; we may naturally aſk by what means it happens, that authors who have attained ſo high a degree of excellence in one of theſe ſpheres, are yet ſo deficient in the other? for amidſt all that variety of events by which the works that exhibit marks of

this

this invention are ſeparately characteriſed, the reader, who may expect to meet with a correſponding variety of qualities in the minds and deportment of the principal perſonages, will be ſurpriſed to find evidences in this point of view of barren invention, defective arrangement, and upon the whole of an inſipid and diſguſting uniformity. The numerous inſtances which we meet with in theſe works, becauſe they indicate always the exiſtence of imagination, are upon a ſuperficial view ſuppoſed to determine its extent. But however beautiful in themſelves, yet the illuſion ſubſides when they are contemplated in this laſt light, and we perceive the weight that ought to be laid upon them.

In the ſame manner it muſt be obvious that if the variety of events that may take place in a work, are no indications of a great, they are as little to be regarded as the marks of an exuberant imagination. The laſt mentioned quality is ſaid to characteriſe this power of the mind when it is obſerved to throw out a profuſion of images; to clothe its objects in the moſt

luxuriant

luxuriant drapery; when in ſhort, not ſatisfied with what is merely proper and expedient, it adds likewiſe whatever is ſuppoſed to be beautiful and ornamental.

However, very little attention will ſerve to convince us that the talent of colouring Compoſition is wholly diſtinct from that of inventing incidents; and that though few men poſſeſs the former, who are not likewiſe capable of exerciſing the latter of theſe, yet the exertion of this laſt by no means implies a power in the perſon whom it diſtinguiſheth, of diſplaying the other to equal advantage. Thus will it be ſaid that, in the works formerly mentioned where we meet with a ſeries of ſtupendous and aſtoniſhing events; thoſe picturesque images are introduced which place the various ſcenes in ſucceſſion before the very eye of the ſpectator *? Are the events

* It is not meant that theſe remarks ſhould be applied either to the Orlando Furioſo, or to Spencer's noble allegorical poem, in both of which the deſcription is almoſt as diverſified as the events:—it is only intended to evince, from taking a view of works diſtinguiſhed

events even when ſuppoſed to be ſuch as might arreſt the attention of a judicious reader, as theſe deſcribed, or does the author who invents, appear able to paint them with that rich, vivid, and expreſſive colouring, which confers importance on the moſt trivial circumſtances, and excites admiration by ſomething wholly independent of any tranſaction, as the mind is taught to feel this paſſion when a ſenſation entirely oppoſite muſt have been raiſed even by correct and chaſtiſed compoſitions *? Do we obſerve, in ſhort, that the power of multiplying and diverſifying events is naturally characteriſtical of that which throws out a blaze of imagery, and

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guiſhed only by numerous incidents, that the degree of imagination required to effectuate this purpoſe is not ſo eminent as is uſually ſuppoſed; and to aſſign an author in whom this excellence is principally conſpicuous, his proper rank in the ſcale of genius.

* "Tum eſt Hyperbole virtus, cum res ipſa de qua loquendum eſt, naturalem modum exceſſit. Conceditur enim amplius dicere, quia dici quantum eſt non poteſt: meliuſque ultra quam citra ſtat oratio." Quintil. lib. viii. cap. 6.

riots

riots in luxurious ornament; or do we aſſociate with this idea, that likewiſe of a perſon,

Qui irritat, mulcet, falſis terroribus implet
Ut Magus, & modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis?

After all however it is not our deſign to inſinuate that the ſpecies of invention laſt mentioned is never to be regarded as the criterion of fertile and copious imagination *. Our obſervations on this ſubject regard rather the nature of thoſe objects which this faculty delights to contemplate, than the degree in which (excluding this laſt conſideration) it may be acknowledged to ſubſiſt. The truth is, our judgment of the genius of a writer depends wholly upon the principle we lay down as the moſt eſſential teſt of this uncommon character. If a diſplay of various

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* Εϛι δε ου το οπωσουν (ſays Longinus ſpeaking of the adjurations of Demoſthenes) τι ομοσαι μεγα, το δε πω και πως, και εφ' ων καιρων, και τινος ενεκα. Αλλ' εκει μεν ουδεν ες' ει μη ορκως, και ωρος ευτυχουντας ετι, και ω δεομενως παρηϛοριας τως Αθηναιως. TMHM. ις.

and complicated events is viewed as the evidence of original invention, a judgment will be formed of the imagination from which theſe were derived, either as a reader may be directed by the nature of the incidents, or from their diverſified combinations perceived to take place. If on the other hand we conſider the greatneſs and luxuriance of this faculty as indicated by the novelty and grandeur of thoſe illuſtrations, ſentiments, or characters which may paſs before the mind as a ſubject may require any one of theſe alternately to prevail:—in that caſe, the former ſpecies of invention will ſuggeſt the idea of verſatility rather than elevation of fancy; and even an incident comparatively great and intereſting will rarely be conſidered without the concurring circumſtance of exalted imagery, as the certain characteriſtic of a ſublime imagination.

In order to render this remark more thoroughly comprehended,—let it be obſerved,—that in eſtimating the greatneſs of any event whatever (contemplated in the preſent point of view) we muſt overlook

look the natural advantages or diſadvantages of the perſons by whoſe miniſtration it is ſuppoſed to be effectuated. By *natural* advantages, &c. I underſtand thoſe qualities which we are apt invariably to aſſociate with a certain order of beings, as ſuperior ſtrength, magnitude, velocity, perſeverance, whoſe exiſtence and combination being wholly independent of the author, cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed to give him additional merit. Thus Milton arming his celeſtial combatants with the mountains; and Homer placing in the hands of his human heroes broken rocks, ſtones of enormous ſize, ſhields and ſpears proportioned to their proweſs; and even clothing them from the armoury of Vulcan;—thoſe two great geniuſes are with regard to theſe circumſtances on a level with each other. The comparative extent and fertility of their invention muſt be eſtimated from proofs more immediately expreſſive of an imagination able to explore the latent ſources of wonder, and to aſtoniſh the mind with great and unexpected combinations.—Taking this truth there-

fore for granted, it will follow that as an author can juſtly lay claim to no great merit as an inventor from the ſuperior ability of his perſons, ſo the events that ariſe from this circumſtance, conſidered as adapted to it with juſtneſs and propriety, are proofs indeed of accuracy and clear underſtanding, but not of exuberance or ſublimity of imagination. In this laſt point of view there is indeed a kind of preſumptive evidence that he who at the ſame time ſelects the moſt dignified perſonages, and employs theſe in tranſactions proportioned to their greatneſs, poſſeſſeth himſelf an imagination fitted to take in exalted and ſublime ideas. But this very preſumption is a deciſive proof that the events themſelves, however extraordinary, carry no conviction along with them as to this matter; ſince after having heard theſe recited, our judgment is ſtill ſuſpended, until we obſerve the manner in which a work is executed. Thus let us ſuppoſe that we had been informed of the combat of Michael and Satan, in the Paradiſe Loſt, without knowing at the ſame time that

ſtyle

ſtyle of exalted imagery, and thoſe circumſtances expreſſive of divine genius that are wrought into the deſcription. Was a ſtranger told more particularly that the author of this work deſcribed an engagement betwixt beings of a ſuperior order; carried on ſometimes by the conflict of hoſts encountering in the air, ſometimes by the combat of their leaders oppoſed to each other which ſuſpended the action; let us judge him to be informed that the prize for whoſe poſſeſſion theſe combatants fought, was as far beyond the reach of man's ambition, as the perſons themſelves exceeded him in ſtrength and capacity; and finally, that the action terminated by the deſcent of the Almighty, and by a puniſhment inflicted on his enemies befitting omnipotence; it is obvious that the evidence of the author's genius ariſing from this account would be at moſt preſumptive and conjectural.—In order to be thoroughly convinced whether he poſſeſſed an imagination adequate to ſo great a ſubject, we would immediately have recourſe to the work itſelf, and take in the circum-

ſtances formerly ſuggeſted. When we come to examine it in this point of view, our attention is called off from the incidents to the characters, the ſentiments, and the ſplendor of the imagery. In theſe lights, when before the commencement of the battle we meet with ſuch a ſtroke as the following:

> High in the midſt, exalted as a God
> Th' apoſtate in his ſun-bright chariot ſat;
> Idol of majeſty divine; incloſed
> With flaming cherubim and golden ſhields;
> Then lighted from his gorgeous throne; for now
> 'Twixt hoſt and hoſt but narrow ſpace was left
> A dreadful interval!

or when we behold this great arch-angel recoiling from the ſtroke of Abdiel

> — — — as if on earth
> Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
> Sidelong had puſh'd a mountain from his ſeat,
> Half ſunk with all his pines!

perhaps theſe, and a few other ſtrokes of the ſame kind would convey to a real judge of poetic Compoſition a truer idea of the genius of Milton, than a ſimple narration of all the incidents (various and noble as theſe are) of this divine performance.

From

From the whole then we may conclude, that a numerous and diverſified ſeries of incidents is always an evidence of a flexible and excurſive, commonly of a copious and comprehenſive imagination; and that in ſome inſtances it affords the higheſt preſumption that this faculty is at the ſame time ſublime and exuberant. It forms likewiſe by far the moſt various and agreeable exerciſe of this faculty; ſo agreeable indeed, that even its wildeſt and moſt irregular excurſions afford an entertainment from which we never riſe diſguſted or ſatiated. When the rules of credibility are once wholly violated, an author muſt either give the utmoſt diſguſt to his readers, or he ought to ſet no bounds to the excurſions of fancy. This laſt circumſtance it is which gives ſuch high merit of one kind to thoſe delightful tales which go under the name of Arabian Night's Entertainments. The mind in peruſing theſe is inchanted with the wild and variegated ſucceſſion of objects ever new, and dwells upon theſe with that kind of pleaſure which it receives from a dream where many pleaſ-

ing illuſions are floating perpetually before the imagination. In this caſe we permit ourſelves willingly to be impoſed upon, and rather than loſe the pleaſure of viewing ſuch beautiful machinery as the ſylphs in the Rape of the Lock, or ſuch ſublime beings as the Mohammedan Genii, we are contented to aſſign both a momentary exiſtence.——But when actions wholly beyond the power of man are aſcribed to a merely human agent (as in thoſe monſtrous collections of abſurdities entitled, Clelia, Cleopatra, Caſſandra, &c.) and that in ſo ſerious a manner as if theſe were real, we reject the impoſture with indignation, and conſider the attempt as an inſult on the underſtanding.

III. Having thus taken a view of imagination as the ſource of beautiful imagery and of diverſified incidents in the various ſpecies of Compoſition, this power falls next under our conſideration as throwing out new and ingenious ſentiment.—Sentiment! (will ſome reader exclaim) of what ſentiment is imagination the parent?—This important province is conſidered as occupied

occupied wholly by the underſtanding. We have already obſerved that the power here contemplated ought always to be viewed either as acting in direct ſubſerviency to that of reaſon, or at leaſt as united with ſome ſhare of it. That ſentiments in order to have either propriety or connection with each other, muſt be ſuch as the underſtanding hath approved, is a truth which no man will call in queſtion. Of thoſe however, there are ſome which in conſequence of indicating a certain wildneſs which we conſider as a criterion of imagination; of being thrown out with promptitude rather than with accuracy; of being placed in looſe arrangement; of preſenting in ſhort, upon the whole, ideas which the mind rather contemplates as brilliant, with a tranſient ſatisfaction, than dwells on as juſt with fixed attention;— we aſcribe originally to that power whoſe various offices we here enumerate.

As thoughts that have a kind of wild originality derived from fancy, a man of reflection will conſider many of thoſe ingenious conjectures in philoſophy which will

will not ſtand the teſt of a cloſe examination. Sentiments of the other kinds are ſuch as we meet with moſt commonly either in ſuperficial ſketches of a ſubject not brought to perfection; or in thoſe looſe pieces in which ideas are careleſsly expreſſed as they occur, and methodiſed arrangement is profeſſedly ſet aſide. When we conſider Plato's account of the origin of rivers, fountains, &c. from a capacious reſervoir in the bowels of the earth, we admire the ſublime genius of the philoſopher, but are ſenſible that this notion had its origin in his imagination. We have already ſhewn that a cloſe attention to method often takes place even in thoſe ſallies of wit and humour in which it is at firſt view leaſt perceptible. When this is the caſe, we acknowledge the whole conduct to have maſtery. There are, however, pieces that pleaſe upon the whole as imitations of nature, in which a lively fancy appears to have delineated objects juſt as they occurred, and to have coloured ſo highly thoughts that indicate quickneſs rather than depth of conception, as to merit

merit the appellation of having originally ſuggeſted them.

Theſe we muſt obſerve with very little attention to be the peculiar and immediate provinces of imagination; which, inſtead of proceeding by ſlow and deliberate gradations in its proceſs, making every ſtep in the ſcale of evidence lead naturally to another, is characteriſed by its combination of diſſimilar ideas, aſſociated from points of reſemblance extremely remote, but whoſe union, when once formed, is by this very circumſtance rendered ſtriking and uncommon. In the ſeries of thoughts, however, ariſing in this manner from various exertions of the inventive faculty, ſome will no doubt appear to have been immediately derived from the different external forms of nature. Others on the contrary, wholly ſubordinate to, and incidentally riſing as it were from the former, will grow out from the principal ſubject, which like a vigorous plant will thus appear ſurrounded with ſhoots, which ſhew the native ſtrength and fertility of the root from which they ſprung. Of theſe, the former

former conſtitute a vein of ſentiment purely original, and require a very large proportion of what is denominated plaſtic or creative imagination:—the latter are only to be conſidered as the conſequences of being thrown into a certain track, in which when a man of no uncommon genius is once ſet out, he may either improve upon, or add to the diſcovery of the original inventor.

In whatever light, however, we view imagination as the parent of new and ingenious ſentiment, it muſt be acknowledged extremely hazardous to ſubmit to its guidance in this delicate exertion. The province of imagery and that of incidents is indeed naturally occupied by this power, becauſe we know no other adequate to invention in either.—But in the ſphere of ſentiment, the qualities which formerly rendered fancy an agreeable and entertaining companion, become the immediate cauſes of our diſtruſt and ſuſpicion. Thus its vivacity will lead us to be diffident of the clearneſs and comprehenſion of its theory; its verſatility, of the juſtneſs and

ſymmetry

ſymmetry of its proportions; its power of ſeizing remote points of reſemblance will induce us to call in queſtion the accuracy of imitation; and the unuſual combinations which it preſents to the mind will very naturally infuſe a ſuſpicion of their ſolidity and truth. Coherence and proportion are never to be regarded as the native offspring of imagination. This faculty will indeed invent in any branch of ſcience whatever; but without the ſuperintendence of the former, its diſcoveries will conſiſt of looſe and unſupported aſſertions, uncommon perhaps, and ſtriking at firſt view; but which being placed in no juſt connection, and forming no links in the chain of progreſſive evidence, afford not any ſolid improvement to the mind, and are recollected only for their brilliance and novelty. The mind likewiſe under this direction is wholly inadequate to the taſk of examining its deciſions with coolneſs and leiſure; and miſtaking ſome diſtant reſemblance of truth for the object of which it is in purſuit, it is ſatisfied with a

curſory

curſory view, and is called off immediately by ſome newer proſpect.

Upon the whole, therefore, in this ſphere of imagination it will appear neceſſary beyond any other, that this power be kept within the cloſeſt limitations; as a foundation wrong-laid, or formed of improper materials, will render a ſtructure however beautiful to the eye, yet defective in ſtrength, ſolidity, and duration. Thus even where the judgment of an author is comprehenſive and penetrating, it may yet be employed by the former to ſupport a whimſical and extravagant hypotheſis. In this caſe indeed it will be no difficult matter to diſtinguiſh the ſpheres of each; and at the ſame time that we admire the romantic theory of fancy, we may contemplate with wonder the acuteneſs and ſubtility of that judgment which can ſupport it by ſubtle diſtinctions and the moſt plauſible arguments. A work of this kind will however be viewed by the diſcerning judge only as a ſplendid monument of human weakneſs; and as a proof of the many

errors

errors into which a man will be led by endeavouring to render that convincing to the reaſon of others, which had its origin from a different faculty in himſelf. No work therefore will ever be valuable in point of ſentiment, unleſs when the imagination of the writer acts in immediate ſubſerviency to his underſtanding, which reviews its various objects, and ſelects ſuch as have fitneſs for a certain end from the promiſcuous aſſemblage. Thus it will happen that the tendency of theſe when duly eſtimated will be, to extend the reader's knowledge of his ſubject, rather than amuſe him by ſtriking on his fancy; and that the whole will evince that ſagacity and good ſenſe which is the parent of accuracy, perſpicuity, and proportion.

IV. From the preceding remarks on the ſpheres and operations of fancy in the preſent ſubject, its importance in Compoſition will, we preſume, be ſufficiently conſpicuous, and its modes of exertion will become in ſome degree familiar to the mind. Of theſe however (various as they are) the higheſt and moſt difficult remains to be

conſidered

conſidered as diſcovered in the higher ſpecies of Compoſition in the invention of characters. As we have already ſeen in the courſe of our obſervations, that the other indications of this faculty may appear in a conſiderable meaſure, where this laſt is either wholly wanting, or extremely deficient; and as experience muſt convince us that the introduction of characters diſtinguiſhed by ſtrokes of originality, and ſupported with dignity through a complicated ſeries of events; that this is one of the rareſt efforts of genius, and ſuch as requires the greateſt proportion of intellectual qualities *; it will be no incurious reſearch

* The truth of theſe remarks will be fully evinced, if we conſider only the various circumſtances to which an author muſt attend in order to render his characters ſuch as may acquire approbation from the more judicious or diſcerning. Theſe are ſo juſtly ranged, in the following paſſage, by an author who was well acquainted with human nature, that nothing farther needs to be added on this part of the ſubject.

"Natio: (primo exſequenda eſt) nam & gentibus proprii mores ſunt; nec idem in Barbaro, Romano, Græco probabile eſt. Patria: quia ſimiliter etiam civitatum leges,

reſearch to examine the cauſe which renders this invention particularly difficult, and which leads a reader of diſcernment to value it ſo highly where it is found upon examination to take place.

In that ſpecies of invention which ariſeth as we have already ſeen from known objects placed in ſtriking and unuſual combinations, it will be acknowledged, that the eaſieſt taſk is performed by that perſon whoſe excellence lies in having ſelected from the variety of external ones thoſe which have perhaps eſcaped the attention of former imitators. The moſt arduous is aſſigned to him, who ſurveying ideas purely intellectual, and to whoſe diſcovery or arrangement the ſenſes cannot be ſuppoſed

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leges, inſtituta, opiniones habent differentiam. Sexus: ut latrocinium facilius in viro, veneficium in fæmina credas. Ætas: quia aliud aliis annis magis convenit. Educatio & diſciplina: quoniam refert a quibus & quo quiſque modo inſtitutus. Habitus corporis: ducitur enim frequenter in argumentum ſpecies libidinis, robur petulantiæ, his contraria in diverſum. Fortuna: nec enim idem credibile eſt in divite aut paupere propinquis, amicis, clientibus abundant & his omnibus deſtituto, &c." Inſtitut. lib. v. cap. 10.

at all to contribute, is yet able to form ſuch various, juſt, and animated expreſſions; to accompliſh ſuch new and happy exhibitions of nature as reſult from the union of experience and diſcernment. In the firſt caſe, an author has indeed the merit of rendering a proſpect peculiarly pleaſing by placing at proper intervals objects calculated to excite at the ſame time pleaſure by their beauty, and wonder by their novelty. This merit, however, is conſiderably leſſened, when we reflect that the materials of which the whole is compounded lie open to the ſenſes. Imagination therefore, when employed to cull out amidſt an exhauſtleſs variety, ſuch forms as have been paſſed over without obſervation, acts the ſame part as he who by a peculiar quickneſs of external perception, even without the aid of experience, ſhould obſerve in a collection of diamonds a few of the pureſt water, and ſelect theſe for his own uſe; after the whole had undergone the ſevereſt ſcrutiny, and every jewel of real value was deemed to have become a ſucceſſive object of admiration. Here

therefore

therefore we aſcribe to the inventive faculty quickneſs and energy; we are ſtruck with the acuteneſs and novelty of its perceptions. But employed as we ſtill ſuppoſe it to be in the ſelection of objects which have an independent original; or in the imitation of beauties which it cannot improve; we conſider it upon the whole as poſſeſſing only a kind of ſecondary originality; and its work as the ſucceſsful diſplay of an elegant landſcape.

When from this view of imagination in the former caſe, where it works upon materials laid before it, we paſs to the latter, where theſe in conſequence of their nature and diſtance are collected at leaſt with greater difficulty, and the mind is agreeably flattered with the thought of raiſing in ſome ſenſe a new creation;—when we contemplate this exertion of fancy, the proſpect aſſumes a very different appearance. The mind inſtead of taking cognizance only of external objects, is employed to combine remote and abſtracted ideas, independent of it indeed with regard to their original exiſtence, but which are

placed in a point of view wholly extraordinary, and whoſe union forms altogether an object never formerly perceived. While the one therefore only imitates beauties preſented to him by ſenſation, the other by a ſtrenuous effort of reflection placing the radical qualities by which man is diſtinguiſhed in an uncommon light, becomes properly the inventor or maker of a new character. He exceeds therefore the other in the ſame proportion as the painter, who by throwing innumerable animated and diverſified expreſſions into the faces of an audience, ſuggeſts the full meaning, action, and vehemence of the orator; would be admitted to excell him whoſe merit lay in diſcerning and copying a caricatura *.

It

* That we may not be judged from the compariſon ſtated here, to have magnified one effort of imagination at the expence of detracting from another in which the energy and extent of that faculty are extremely conſpicuous; it may be proper to obſerve, that, by copying a caricatura, it is not meant to repreſent the objects of deſcriptive Compoſition as in general either mean in themſelves, or as indicating when pourtrayed with accuracy and elegance, a ſcanty proportion of the inventive

It will be ſaid perhaps, in anſwer to theſe obſervations on the invention of characters,

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"inventive faculty. It is only intended to ſhow this in its proper light, when ſet in oppoſition to that ſpecies of invention by which genius appears to be principally characteriſed. That authors of the firſt claſs occupy however, a very high rank in the ſtyle of genius is by no means denied, and will indeed be obvious to any perſon who has taſte to diſcern the refined and exquiſite beauties of deſcription, and a ſufficient ſhare of imagination himſelf to judge of the exertion by which theſe in moſt inſtances are ſelected and pourtrayed. The ingenious author of the Eſſay on the Writings and Genius of Pope, has pointed out ſome ſtrokes of this kind in Thomſon's Seaſons which are in themſelves truly original, and have eſcaped the notice of former critics. Sect. ii. p. 42, &c. I know no writer indeed who in a work profeſſedly deſcriptive has equalled in all reſpects this amiable poet. Theocritus indeed, at firſt view, may appear to ſtand in competition with him, but the merit of the Greek upon nearer inſpection will appear to be inferior to that of the Britiſh poet. In the Idylliums of the former it will be obſerved that there is little deſcriptive beauty of the kind here referred to. The principal merit of theſe inchanting poems conſiſts in their peculiar tenderneſs of ſentiment, and [of] an exquiſite and inimitable ſimplicity of expreſſion. This ſimplicity as it ſeems to be incompatible with ſtrength or variety of epithet, excludes indeed naturally pictureſque and in- [in]

racters, that we have not only in a preceding part of this work attempted to prove

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tenſely animated Compoſition. Accordingly we rarely find Theocritus adopting the epithetical ſtyle; and when he does ſo his epithets are the ſimpleſt imaginable. He generally gives every rural object its common deſignation, and hence ariſeth that unaffected eaſe which as the genuine language of nature is ſo univerſally intereſting.

Ω Λυκοι, ω θωες, ω αν ορεα φωλαδες αρκτοι
Χαιρεθ', ω βωκολος υμμιν εγω Δαφνις κκ' ετ' αν υλαν
Ουκετ' αν αδρυμως, κκ αλσεα' Χαιρ' Αρεθοισα,
Και ποταμοι τοι χειτε καλου κατα θυμβριδος υδωρ.
ΘΕΟΚ. ΘΥΡ.

In the Seaſons of Thomſon we meet with examples of both ſpecies of the beauty here referred to, along with others which the Sicilian bard appears not to have been capable of rivaling. That union of ſimplicity and tenderneſs, which forms ſo inchanting a combination, the reader will diſcover in the pathetic tale of Amelia and Celadon, as inſtances of rich and exquiſite painting are univerſally to be met with. This amiable and judicious poet is diſtinguiſhed likewiſe eminently by one excellence which I have not obſerved to be aſcribed to him in the high degree he ſeems to deſerve. I mean that of improving the moſt trivial circumſtance by inſtructive and appropriated illuſtrations. To adduce but one example:—how juſt and expreſſive is the following image, when after having deſcribed

the

prove that imitation in ſome ſenſe extends to the whole compaſs of human inveſtigation; but this repreſentation of character proceeds in moſt caſes obviouſly from the principle above-mentioned, as it implies only the power in an author of copying ſucceſsfully thoſe characters with which experience and obſervation have rendered him converſant.

Admitting the truth of both theſe remarks, it ought ſtill however to be remembered, that in the firſt caſe where a character is marked with ſtrokes of originality, and ſtrikes us, upon the whole, rather in

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the birds as conveying "the moſt delicious morſel to their young," the poet immediately ſays

——— Even ſo a gentle pair,
By fortune ſunk, but form'd of generous mould,
In ſome lone cott amidſt the diſtant woods,
Suſtain'd alone by providential Heaven,
Oft' as they weeping eye their infant train,
Check their own appetites and give them all.

We ſhall conclude this long note by obſerving that deſcriptive poetry in ſuch inſtances as theſe, aſſumes indeed a dignified aſpect, and indicates in the writer an high ſhare of the moſt valuable qualities both intellectual and moral, that are conferred on mankind.

the light of what may be ſuppoſed to take place, than of what we have had occaſion to witneſs as actually exiſting; in this caſe we have already ſeen the term invention to be applied with particular propriety. In the other, where the imitation is more perceptible, we muſt yet acknowledge it from the refined and abſtracted nature of the objects imitated, to demand an exertion of which an imagination able to ſtrike off exact reſemblances in the field of external beauties, might be deemed incapable.

Great, however, and comprehenſive as we muſt ſuppoſe an imagination to be, that is adequate in moſt inſtances to the invention of characters, reflection will yet lead us to diſtinguiſh the degrees in which this faculty takes place, as indicated by the following circumſtances: by the various qualities that enter into a character; by the diſcriminating ſtrokes that ſerve to give it ſtrength and peculiarity; and by its grandeur as ariſing from native greatneſs and ſublimity of genius.

Theſe indications we ſhall here conſider ſeparately, in order to have a full view

of

of the province of this power in Compoſition.

1. With regard to the firſt mentioned, the qualities that enter into a character, it will be acknowledged that the Ulyſſes of Homer, diſtinguiſhed by ſo various an aſſemblage of ſtriking qualifications, ſets the inventive powers of this writer in a much ſtronger light than either his Neſtor or Diomed, whoſe characters are more uniform. Theſe laſt, however, taken in with the former, fill us with the higheſt admiration of a mind capable of varying this aſſemblage ſo much, and of comprehending the parts of ſo complicated a detail. It is indeed a taſk incomparably more difficult to exhibit a variety of diſtinct qualifications as combined to form one character, than to parcel theſe out as it were among many perſons, and to aſſign each a ſeparate virtue or vice which along with a few common and ſubordinate acquirements complete the exhibition.

When a very various aſſemblage of qualities meet in one character, each muſt receive different expreſſions according to

thoſe with which it is united, while at the ſame time the diſtinguiſhing marks muſt be uniformly maintained by which it ought on all occaſions to be known. When, on the other hand, only a few are brought together, many of theſe expreſſions are neceſſarily loſt, ſuch of them in particular as ariſe from the union of one qualification with others that are diſſimilar to it. The office therefore that is aſſigned to imagination, when a prevailing quality is exhibited only in few lights, even though ſtrong and pictureſque, is deemed with great juſtice inferior to that which it exerciſeth when the ſame quality, whether moral or intellectual, is placed before the mind in many different views, as it receives a caſt from intricate, ſtriking, and unuſual combinations.

In the portrait of Ulyſſes that wiſdom which forms his diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic, is happily expoſed in ſo many points of view ariſing from other virtues, or even imperfections which it calls out to obſervation, as will ſerve to illuſtrate fully the preceding remarks.—Thus when joined

with

with juſt and glowing indignation it prompts him to chaſtiſe vice or inſolence (as in the puniſhment of Therſites in the Iliad, or of the ſuitors in the Odyſſey) with a ſeverity unexpected perhaps, and ſuddenly exerted, but which appears upon examination to have been the effect of thought, and adapted properly to the occaſion *. When co-operating with heroic fortitude and the love of his country, it becomes in the laſt exigence a principle by which he is induced to place himſelf in the breach againſt a victorious enemy †, all other expedients having proved ineffectual ‡. Animated by zeal in a critical moment, it produceth the moſt active and vigorous meaſures §. In dangerous circumſtances, on the contrary, it is cool, conſiderate, and fruitful of reſources ¶. When joined with ambition, it is eloquent and inſinuating ‖, intrepid and reſolute; the ſame

* ΙΛΙΑΔ β. ΟΔΥΣ. χ, † Id.

‡ ΙΛΙΑΔ. λ. 401, &c. § Id. β. 265.

¶ See his night-adventure with Diomed ΙΛΙΑΔ. κ. 240, & ſeq.

‖ See his ſpeech to Achilles. ΙΛΙΑΔ. Γ. 225, &c.

power

power which ſuggeſts at one time the moſt prudent councils *, permitting at another the nobleſt emulation †.—In fine, amidſt all this variety of paſſions, temptations, and dangerous enterprizes, inſtead of being ſometimes dropt as might naturally be expected, or of acting frequently by interrupted exertions, it is a conſiſtent and operating principle, aſſuming the direction upon every occaſion, and appearing moſt conſpicuous in thoſe ſituations where from the paſſions of human nature it was moſt difficult to be preſerved.—In the two characters of Neſtor and Diomed, diſtinguiſhed as both are by the ſame predominant quality, it is placed, however, in lights extremely different both from that of Ulyſſes, and from each other. The wiſdom of the former is principally the reſult of experience in an old man, endowed naturally with ſagacity and penetration; as that of the latter is the reſult of early reflection in a young warrior, who, unaided himſelf by experience, has ſtill docility enough to re-

* ΙΛΙΑΔ. λ. 312. τ. 154. 215.

† Id. η. 168. ψ. 755, &c.

ceive

ceive inſtruction from a ſage with whom, notwithſtanding the diſparity of years, a general ſimilarity of diſpoſition eſtabliſheth an intercourſe of good offices *.

* The friendſhip that is obſerved on every occaſion to take place betwixt Neſtor and Diomed, diſcovers at the ſame time the judgment of Homer, and his extenſive knowledge of the human heart. The laſt mentioned might be ſuppoſed at firſt view rather to have made choice of Ulyſſes, whom he appears indeed to treat upon all occaſions with particular reſpect. But beſides that theſe laſt might be conſidered as rivals, a character which neceſſarily excludes any great degree of intimacy, the general ſimilarity which takes place betwixt Neſtor and Diomed renders their mutual friendſhip perfectly natural. Neſtor poſſeſſeth that calm and conſiderate valour which appears always to have been regulated by prudence, and which is now moderated by a very conſiderable ſhare of experience. Diomed with both the former of thoſe qualities, is from his early youth deficient in the latter; and applies to the ſage whom he reverenceth as a father, to have this defect compenſated. This affection will likewiſe appear to be ſtill more natural, if we conſider it as beſtowed on a perſon who poſſeſſed great benignity and ſweetneſs of diſpoſition. Thus the eloquence of Neſtor is particularly characteriſed as diſtinguiſhed by the milder and more inſinuating graces.

——— τοισι δε Νεςωρ
Ηδυεπης αναρουσε, λιγυς Πυλιων αγορητης
Του και απο γλωσσης μελιτος γλυκιων ρεεν αυδη.
ΙΛΙΑΔ. α.

It

It may indeed be obſerved, with the ſtricteſt truth, that in the whole conduct of this perplexing detail an eminent ſhare of judgment is indiſpenſibly requiſite, as well as a vigorous and extenſive imagination. That the laſt of theſe however is principally conſpicuous in it will be acknowledged when we reflect that its peculiar province, as hath been already evinced, is to give that air of originality to any performance which reſults from a new and various aſſemblage of objects; and in proportion as theſe are ſingular in their kind, or diverſified in their ſituation, are we naturally induced to conſider that genius as creative and exuberant which gave birth to ſo many agreeable and intereſting circumſtances.—In this proceſs the power of invention is particularly diſtinguiſhed as taking an enlarged and extenſive range in the field of ſpeculation; as aſſociating ideas drawn from the moſt remote reſources; and as aſtoniſhing the mind by the variety, beauty, and perpetual novelty of its materials. To reaſon the difficult taſk is aſſigned of preſerving coherence and ſymmetry

metry betwixt the ſeparate members of the piece amidſt a diverſity of objects conſtantly fluctuating, and therefore demanding the united efforts of diſcernment, experience, and attention.

2. Theſe remarks on imagination as diſcovered in the invention and conduct of a complicated character, will enable us to form ſome idea of that degree of it which is neceſſary to give the perſons lively, peculiar, and diſcriminating features. As therefore, in the province already pointed out, the inventive power is required to poſſeſs extent and comprehenſion, ſo in the preſent we conſider as diſplayed to the greateſt advantage its vigour and energy. A ſtrong and vivid imagination is known as certainly by this criterion, as a ſight uncommonly piercing and vigorous is diſtinguiſhed by its clear, and accurate perception of external objects, either delicate in their ſtructure, or requiring from their poſition an organization peculiarly excellent. In characters, as in every other ſpecies of inventive exertion, there are certain marks, by whoſe aid, even when theſe are

recom-

mended by novelty and ſupported with judgment, we may yet diſcover the radical ſtrength or imbecility of the power from which they derived their origin. Thus in the other ſpheres of this faculty its coldneſs and debility are ſuppoſed to be indicated by a certain languor of expreſſion much more eaſy to be felt than deſcribed, by ſparing and feeble illuſtrations; by faint and inadequate colouring; and, finally, by ſo obvious a defect in the pictureſque and animated as leaves us at no loſs to diſtinguiſh the cauſe from which theſe proceed. This debility likewiſe becomes always moſt conſpicuous when the author attempts to excel in the higher ſpecies of Compoſition. Some degree of diſcernment may perhaps be deemed neceſſary to diſcover it in the more ſimple branches of this art; becauſe where ſtrength and energy are not conſidered as indiſpenſibly requiſite, it is ſometimes difficult to diſtinguiſh that execution which a ſubject naturally demands from that which is the conſequence of a defective imagination. But when ſome ſtrenuous effort is required, and when the mind

ſinks

ſinks under the greatneſs of its ſubject, even a common obſerver becomes ſenſible of the defect, and can judge of the inequality betwixt the theme and the ability of the writer. A number of characters therefore, in the ſame manner as images, in which we find no great variety of qualities, and the greater number common, or but little diſcriminated from each other, may be contemplated as marks of an imagination inadequate to this high ſtrain of invention, even when in other reſpects it is capable at once of enlarged comprehenſion, and of vigorous exertion *.

As

* It would, no doubt, be deemed temerity to apply this obſervation to one of the greateſt geniuſes of antiquity, who has otherwiſe ſo nobly occupied the higheſt ſphere of human excellence; I mean the divine author of the Æneid; did not the teſtimony of ſome excellent critics concur with proofs that ariſe from the poem itſelf compared with the Iliad, to ſhow its juſtice and propriety. Thoſe have with great truth remarked, that in his *fidus Achates*, his *fortis Gias*, *fortiſque Cloanthus*, his *Niſus* and *Euryalus*, whoſe adventure is ſo obviouſly copied from Homer, and whoſe characters are ſo little diſtinguiſhed by ſtrokes of originality: and finally, that his Æneas himſelf, a calm and moderate

As a ſtrong imagination therefore will give to its characters ſignificance and peculiarity, ſo we may eſtimate in a great meaſure, the degree of its ſtrength from the nature of that theme, or action, which it is employed to celebrate. Thus we have ſeldom reaſon to expect that a man of cool and temperate fancy will make choice of a ſubject demanding not merely the temporary, but almoſt invariable prevalence of qualities, in which he muſt feel himſelf (comparatively at leaſt) to be deficient. Even ſuppoſing him from the partiality of mankind in circumſtances of this nature, not to be ſenſible of this defect, yet the choice of ſuch a man will fall much more naturally upon a general ſubject (ſuch as that of the Æneid or Phar-

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hero, brave indeed, pious and intrepid; but indicating from thoſe very qualities an imagination more chaſte and temperate, than the fierce, the impetuous, the implacable Achilles; our critics have remarked, that theſe are all indications of an invention unequal to this high rank of excellence, and defective in that vigour with regard to peculiarity of character, which however is diſplayed ſo eminently in the narration, expreſſion, and colouring of his work.

ſalia),

ſalia), great perhaps, and comprehenſive, with whoſe magnificence the mind is elevated and dilated, than merely upon the effects of one particular paſſion, and that too the moſt impetuous and ungovernable of all that actuate the human mind. In this laſt caſe it muſt be obvious that the firſt propoſal of ſuch a theme would ſuggeſt to us the idea of an imagination rapid, glowing, and intenſely ſpirited from the conſideration of thoſe ſallies abrupt and animated to which this paſſion muſt neceſſarily give riſe, and of that dark but expreſſive colour, which muſt naturally tincture and predominate in the character.

Contemplated in the preſent point of view, the author of the Iliad will be found to excel all other uninſpired writers as much in the ſtrength of thoſe ſignatures which diſtinguiſh his perſons, as in the ſplendor, richneſs, and beauty of his illuſtrations. His ſubject is preciſely of that kind which a daring imagination could alone have adopted. He breaks into it likewiſe with an abruptneſs ſuited to the theme, and with one ſtroke of his creative

pencil gives the outlines of an hero unbridled, furious, implacable, reſentful, in whom thoſe diſtinguiſhing qualities are afterwards called out, and are ſo ſtrongly marked in the detail of his conduct.

ΜΗΝΙΝ αειδε θεα Πηληιαδεω Αχιλησς

" Sing (ſays he) O goddeſs, the wrath " of Achilles the ſon of Peleus."—The Roman poet, whoſe imagination in conſequence of its equability was more fitted to take a comprehenſive ſurvey of various objects, but leſs to diſcriminate theſe from each other by vigour and energy, opens his ſubject with a detail of circumſtances, which, however noble and intereſting in themſelves, yet ſtrike not the mind ſo forcibly when taken together, as the ſingle ſtroke of his inimitable rival *.

Arma

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* The remark made in the text on the invention of Homer, as diſplayed in the ſtrength of his ideas, and in the maſterly ſtroke by which his perſonages are marked and introduced, will impreſs the mind more ſtrongly when we compare the introduction of the Odyſſey with that of the Iliad, as expreſſive of his own character in the various periods of life. As in the latter, when his genius was in its full maturity and vigour,

Arma virumque cano. Trojæ qui primus ab oris
Italiam fato profugus, Lavinaque venit
Littora, &c.

It were eaſy to evince by a variety of examples drawn from the higheſt ſtandards of poetic Compoſition, both ancient and modern *, the manner in which a genius diſtinguiſhed by the characteriſtic above-mentioned will diſplay it in the various pourtrait of manners. The reader, however, by carrying the preceding obſervations along with him will be able to judge for himſelf in this matter, a fuller diſcuſſion of which belongs more properly to a ſubſequent ſection.

3. From the conſideration of an extenſive and vigorous invention as diſplayed in the various ingredients, and in the diſ-

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vigour, we find him breaking abruptly into his ſubject, and chooſing the moſt various and difficult imaginable; ſo in the former when the fire of his imagination muſt have ſubſided with age, we find his hero deſcribed as recollected and moderate, and the bard entering coolly into the detail of circumſtances when he propoſes his theme.

* Ανδρα μοι εννιπε Μουσα πολυτροπον, ὃς μαλα πολλα Πλαγθη.

criminating ſtrokes of a character, we are led naturally to view it in this enlarged ſphere of its operation as exhibiting evidences of greatneſs and ſublimity. Theſe we ſuppoſe always to be indicated when ſome perſonage of ſuperior merit is introduced either as a principal or ſubordinate actor in the piece, and when amidſt many critical, important, and unexpected incidents, we find the native dignity ſo invariably ſupported, as that without difficulty we can from the circumſtances in which the perſon is placed, form an idea of the manner in which his actions will be regulated. We muſt here, however, make a diſtinction betwixt comprehenſion and ſublimity of genius as diſcovered in this conduct, ſince the former of theſe is principally conſpicuous in the nature of the ſubject *, whereas

* It is neceſſary to obſerve here, that this view of a comprehenſive ſubject as indicating in ſome branches of Compoſition a great imagination, ought by no means to be confounded with what hath been advanced in a former part of this ſection on the invention of incidents. It was obſerved that theſe laſt however great or

whereas the latter wholly relates to ſome individual as the perſon to whom all is referred. Thus in the Paradiſe Loſt it is obvious that the firſt propoſal of a ſubject comprehending heaven, hell, the chaos, and origin of all things; a ſtate of nature altogether different from the preſent, and objects in the ſame manner diſtinguiſhed from thoſe with which we are converſant, that the propoſal of this ſubject muſt fill our minds with the idea of a genius capable of taking in an uncommon compaſs of thought, and great in proportion to the abſtracted nature of thoſe objects it was

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or extraordinary afford no certain characteriſtic of a *ſublime* imagination, unleſs when ſomething exalted appears likewiſe either in the ſentiment or imagery. When we obſerve a ſeries of theſe extremely complicated to be diſpoſed in exact order, and to follow each other ſo naturally as to give uniformity and conſiſtency to a fable, we judge with propriety the underſtanding of the author to be accurate, and his imagination comprehenſive.—But to conſtitute a *great* diſplay of genius, each of theſe taken ſeparately muſt have ſome proportion of grandeur in order to form one noble and magnificent whole. In this caſe, the comprehenſive nature of the ſubject may be ſaid to denominate not only an extenſive, but a great imagination.

employed to contemplate. The character of ſublimity, on the other hand, ariſeth principally from the deportment and conduct of certain diſtinguiſhed perſonages.

In general it may be obſerved on this branch of the ſubject, that nothing contributes more to fix the denomination of ſublimity upon a work, than when a great mind is repreſented as riſing ſuperior to the ſhocks of adverſity. In circumſtances invariably proſperous, or even chequered ſometimes with the ſhade of affliction, it is difficult to ſupport this deſignation with propriety, which ſeems to require conſtantly that the ſympathetic feelings of human nature ſhould be awakened, and that the mind ſhould be able to form ſome compariſon betwixt the paſt and the preſent, and dwell on both with a ſolemn and melancholy pleaſure. This circumſtance it is which confers ſuch peculiar dignity on the Satan of Milton, who is therefore repreſented by a rival poet as the hero of his work. When we contemplate this auguſt perſonage as maintaining a ſteady and unſhaken fortitude in a ſituation of

all

all others the moſt ruinous, where even

——— Hope never comes,
That comes to all:

when we behold him coaſting the regions of darkneſs in his arduous journey to earth, encountering alone the ſhock of elements; daring his tremendous foe to the combat; deceiving Uzziel, oppoſing Gabriel; and, finally, perſiſting amidſt dangers of every kind until he had effectuated his purpoſe; when in all theſe ſituations we keep in our eye the glory of his former ſtate, and yet ſee him coping with the higheſt created beings, even when he ſtood

——— With faded ſplendor wan:

the pernicious nature of his enterprize, the malevolence of his diſpoſition, and even the deſtruction which he is repreſented to have brought upon the human race, cannot prevent us from ſurveying him with an admiration and pity, which though it ſhould be culpable, cannot be ſuppreſſed.

In fact, however, the admiration excited by qualities of this kind upon being traced to its ſource, will be diſcovered to exiſt without dependence, not only on moral character of what kind ſoever, but even

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on the more ſtriking light in which a perſon muſt appear when contemplated by an individual as a friend or an enemy. In this laſt caſe, it may indeed happen, that the medium of prejudice will either obſcure the luſtre of thoſe qualities where they are acknowledged to ſubſiſt, and by that means conſiderably leſſen our admiration; or by concealing theſe from us altogether, will remove the cauſe from which this paſſion proceeds. But both the inſtances above-mentioned are proofs that the theory we have here laid down proceeds upon juſt principles, as it is obvious that a mind diſtinguiſhed by the virtues of fortitude, intrepidity, and a certain daring ambition, is contemplated in general with an admiration which can have no other foundation but thoſe excellencies, ſince we find this always correſponding to the degree in which the former are ſuppoſed to take place.

From this train of obſervation we will readily comprehend the reaſon for which true ſublimity of character requires moſt frequently to be diſplayed in adverſity.

The

The virtues of which we have ſeen it principally to conſiſt, are all of them either of that kind (as thoſe of fortitude, patience, intrepidity, &c.) which can only be exerted in actual and reſolute oppoſition to evils, or of that, (as hardy enterprize, or aſpiring ambition) which leads us immediately to foreſee that theſe muſt be encountered. In the laſt mentioned caſes the ſublime of character appears perhaps greater than in the firſt. Imagination in this inſtance is left at liberty to form an idea of perils to be met with when the perſon ſets out on ſome daring and arduous attempt, whereas in the other, it is fixed down to the contemplation of ſuch events as the author has already invented. So much does our pleaſure in all caſes whatever ariſe rather from the expectation of what is to happen, than from the enjoyment of what is actually poſſeſſed.

Thus we have endeavoured by following the track of imagination along the various ſcenes in which its influence is diſplayed, to ſhow its real value and importance in the art of Compoſition; to diſtinguiſh

tinguiſh its genuine exertions when guided by ſound judgment from ſuch as are the conſequences of its intemperance, or which it ſhares in common with other intellectual faculties, to ſhow the degree of its ſtrength or comprehenſion as determined by the objects to which it is directed; and, finally, to aſcertain its merit as the power of invention by marking its effects in the ſimpleſt as well as the moſt diverſified fields of its exerciſe. We might, indeed, have further contemplated this power as the parent of allegorical perſonages, and as productive of that machinery with which fable is decorated. But in both theſe reſpects (as far as they have not fallen within the preceding obſervations) we will naturally be led to conſider imagination in the ſubſequent ſections of this eſſay.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

Of Penetration, or Diſcernment, as it regards Compoſition.

THE offices of the two principal intellectual powers we have conſidered particularly in the preceding ſections, as far as the preſent ſubject is concerned. Before we proceed any farther, it may be proper to pauſe a little here, and take a general view of what each of theſe topics hath ſuggeſted. The faculty of reaſon, and that of imagination we have ſeen to be eſſentially different from each other; not only in their original choice of objects, but in their method of procedure, in order to obtain an ultimate purpoſe. The underſtanding we have obſerved, when employed either in methodiſing the parts of a comprehenſive plan ſo as to give the whole proportion, or in carrying on a proceſs of regular argumentation to a period, accompliſheth its purpoſe univerſally by means that indicate caution and circumſpection.

On

On the contrary, the aſſemblages that are formed by imagination conſiſt of ideas inſtantaneouſly combined, in which the mind expects to meet rather with animated expreſſions than juſt diſpoſition; and with ſtrokes that excite momentary ſenſations, inſtead of ſuch as terminate in permanent conviction. When therefore, it was obſerved in another part of this work, that deliberate recollection and a *gradual* rather than a *rapid* ſucceſſion of ideas, are criteria that accompany a talent for Compoſition *; the remark is to be underſtood of minds, in which this faculty, though loſing no part of its natural quickneſs and energy, is fixed by that of judgment ſo ſteadily upon each particular object as to contemplate and diſplay it with preciſion. The inventions (if we may thus term them) of fancy when viewed apart, as far as ſuch a view can be taken of it, bear no marks of this preciſion. Its flights are ſudden and irregular; its tranſitions frequent and unconnected; and its procedure

* Sect. i. p. 31.

ſuch

ſuch as diſpaſſionate reaſon rather neglects than cenſures.

When we examine with cloſe attention that combination of qualities greatly diverſified, by which the characters of men are diſtinguiſhed, reflection will point out to us the marks of an intellectual power different from both the former in its manner of operation; whoſe effects we ſhall endeavour to unfold more particularly, as it has not as far as we know been formerly diſtinguiſhed from others. The reader will judge from what has been already advanced, that the power here referred to is that denominated the faculty of *Diſcernment*, of which we formerly endeavoured to give ſome general idea. We ſhall here enforce thoſe obſervations, 1. by making ſome remarks on the characters or ſignatures by which this power of the mind is particularly diſtinguiſhed from the others, and on the union by which it is conſtituted. 2. We ſhall conſider its peculiar province, and manner of operation in the various departments of Compoſition.

1. The

1. The word Diſcernment we have formerly obſerved, points out "that mental "faculty which, without carrying on any "regular proceſs, comprehends as it were "inſtantaneouſly the proper manner of "treating any ſubject, by fixing upon the "points that are of primary importance; "and accompliſheth, at once, by theſe "means purpoſes which the underſtanding *alone* cannot effectuate in ſome caſes "by any exertion; and obtains in thoſe "to which it is adapted by a ſlow and deliberate procedure *." The term in this acceptation correſponds to a ſight clear, piercing, and qualified to take immediate as well as ample cognizance of the objects that are preſented to it. That there is a quality of the mind diſtinguiſhed by theſe characters, no man (whether poſſeſſed of it himſelf or not) will call in queſtion, who reflects upon the ideas which the deciſions and ſentiments of thoſe in whom it is judged to predominate, call naturally up to his thought. When we attempt to ex-

* Sect. i. p. 11.

plain

plain any point in which there is conſiderable difficulty, as many, perhaps the far greater number of men, muſt be gradually led to comprehend it by having every part of the proceſs clearly laid open, and every objection regularly ſuperſeded; there are a few with whom this method of proceeding is unneceſſary. As ſoon as the ſubject is laid down, and a few principal evidences laid before them, theſe take in the whole by a kind of intuitive perception; ſupplying the intermediate means ſo quickly, as to render particular repreſentation inexpedient. Such perſons we commonly denominate men of *quick parts*, or of *acute intellect*. When engaged in the ſame manner in the buſineſs of life, the ſame qualities by whoſe exertion they are *acute critics* in the former inſtance, render them *penetrating obſervers* in the other. In this laſt caſe indeed, ſome part of that knowledge of mankind which experience confers, muſt be acquired, without whoſe influence the greateſt abilities muſt fail of judging with adequate comprehenſion. But when there is a concurrence of this laſt with certain

qualities which we ſhall explain afterwards, the man becomes capable of entering deeply into the characters of thoſe with whom he is converſant. He gains a facility of reading in the countenance thoſe ſenſations, however cloſely concealed, that actuate the heart *; and of collecting from caſual, looſe, and unſupported aſſertions thrown out apparently at random, as hints of what might have been advanced, ſuch ſignificant and diſtinguiſhing criteria as are deciſive of their juſtneſs, propriety, and importance.

When we conſider with the ſame object in view, the finer arts as they are called, particularly thoſe of poetry and eloquence, effects ſimilar to ſuch as have been already mentioned, naturally point to the ſame original cauſe. The tranſitions particularly in purely poetic compoſition, are often

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* "Eſt in primis *acuti* (ſays a penetrating judge of human nature) videre, quo judex dicto moveatur, quid reſpuat: quod ex *vultu ſæpiſſime*, & aliquando etiam dicto, factove ejus deprehenditur. Et inſtare proficientibus, & ab iis quæ non adjuvant, quam molliſſime pedem oportet referre." Quintil. Inſtit. lib. vi. c. 5.

abrupt,

abrupt, and at firſt view appear to be unconnected. The thoughts likewiſe ſeem to ſtand detached from each other; and by the high colouring of imagination are frequently rendered obſcure. Eloquence we have ſeen in the ſame manner to be often moſt conſpicuous, when abrupt interrogations, and ſtrokes of nature and paſſion are thrown into a diſcourſe, whoſe connection with the preceding circumſtances is apparently remote, and to be fully comprehended only by thoſe who have a thorough knowledge of the heart *. As the perſon who works by theſe means upon the moſt powerful principles of human nature, muſt know every method of calling them into ſtrenuous exerciſe; he likewiſe who is ſenſible of the full force of every motive that is applied for ſuch purpoſes, muſt, it

* "In iis cauſis (quæ ſunt frequentiſſimæ) quæ vel ſolis extra artem probationibus, vel miſtis continentur, aſperrima in hac parte dimicatio eſt, nec alibi dixeris magis *mucrone pugnari*. Nam & firmiſſima quæque memoriæ judicis inculcanda ſunt, & præſtandum quicquid in actione promiſimus, & refellanda mendacia." Id. ibid.

is obvious, poſſeſs a conſiderable proportion of the ſame intelligence; and of the faculty that lays open to him the heart and affections.

That this mental power, by whatever deſignation it may be made known, ought to be conſidered in a diſtinct point of view from either of thoſe whoſe offices we have yet mentioned, will be obvious from the following account of its nature and effects.

1. We have already taken notice of one ſtriking difference betwixt the faculty of diſcernment, and the underſtanding or reaſoning power ſtrictly ſo called, as the former is diſtinguiſhed by a quickneſs of perception, which ſtands in oppoſition to the ſlow and cautious procedure of the latter *. This is one of thoſe obſervations which

* It is from having viewed the underſtanding in this light that an eminent writer is enabled to lay down ſo particularly the different methods by which its influence may be counteracted. Theſe he reduces to three heads, which he conſiders as extending to the principal ſubjects in which it is exerciſed.—" Vel per illaqueationem ſophiſmatum quod ad *Dialecticam* pertinet; vel per præſtigias verborum, quod ad *Rhetoricam*;

which it is neither neceſſary nor indeed practicable to confirm by regular argumentation. Every man's feeling and experience muſt decide on the truth of it. It is only requiſite that we obſerve, in order to know how far the powers here compared together, really differ in their method of operation; whether there are not many perſons poſſeſſed of unqueſtioned judgment as diſcovered either in carrying on, or in examining a regular proceſs of argument, who far from taking in the whole the view of capital ſtrokes when expoſed ſeparately, find even the images that illuſtrate ſentiment to ſome minds, ſo many obſtructions to a perfect knowledge of the ſubject; and enter into it thoroughly only when objects paſs ſucceſſively in re-

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Rhetoricam; vel per affectuum violentiam quod ad *Ethicam*. Quemadmodum enim in negotiis quæ cum aliis contrahimus, vinci quis & perduci ſolet, vel aſtu, vel importunitate, vel vehementia, ita etiam in illa negotiatione interna, &c. Neque vero tam infeliciter agitur cum humana natura, ut illæ artes & facultates ad rationem deturbandam valeant; neutiquam vero ad eandem roborandam & ſtabiliendam." Bac. de Augment. Scient. lib. vi. p. 366. edit. Raveſten.

view, deſcribed in the ſimpleſt words, and placed in arrangement ſo nearly perfect, as not to be deficient in any point of the ſmalleſt conſequence. Should this be granted, we are naturally led to aſk, whence it is, that men, who unqueſtionably poſſeſs this intellectual power, and exhibit when called upon every indication of it, diſcover at the ſame time the traces of a procedure which never characteriſes the man of mere underſtanding? The *different manner of operation* here evidently diſtinguiſheth this laſt mentioned faculty from that to which we apply the word Diſcernment, in whoſe conduct we obſerve the marks of underſtanding eminently conſpicuous, along with ſuch as appear to be derived from ſome original wholly diſtinct from it.

2. But not only is this quality different from the former in the inſtance abovementioned. We ſhall find it to be ſo in an equal degree, when we conſider Comprehenſion as ſhared in common by both.

The man of Diſcernment may be ſaid in general to form a much more comprehenſive view of things than he who poſſeſſeth judgment

judgment alone, however clear and extenſive; becauſe he takes into his eſtimate, as we ſhall ſee immediately, a much larger and more diverſified ſeries of objects. It ought however to be obſerved at the ſame time, that as the ſphere in which this faculty acts is much larger than that of the other, ſo its deciſions are ſometimes leſs accurate. The reaſon of this we ſhall diſcover upon giving attention to their procedure. The underſtanding by having ſhifted and examined its objects in every point of view, diſcovers at laſt ſuch defects as were at firſt leaſt perceptible; and thus takes into its ſurvey *whatever* is finally ſubſervient to its ultimate purpoſe. The diſcerning faculty on the other hand from its affinity to imagination, attracted moſt commonly by ſtriking, animated, and peculiar expreſſions, is leſs attentive to general uniformity. What it obtains therefore on the part of ſtrength and novelty, it is often in hazard of loſing on the ſide of exactneſs and proportion. Theſe obſervations will be moſt clearly illuſtrated by trying an example.

It is acknowledged univerſally, that true diſcernment is in nothing more conſpicuous, than in combining the various principles of action into ſome *original character*; or in judging of this combination when preſented to view. There is an infinite variety of motives by which conduct may be regulated according to the ſituation in which a man is placed; and in adapting a particular incident ſo happily to the diſtinguiſhing paſſion or principle as to place it in a clear and ſtriking light, an author ſhows himſelf moſt particularly to be a penetrating judge of human nature. But while he is intent upon this circumſtance, the power that enables him to do juſtice to one part of a character, may at the ſame time overlook another of eſſential conſequence, and thus by diſcerning only what is ſuitable at the time, without attending to the mutual coherence of parts, may finiſh one branch with the utmoſt accuracy, while an obvious incongruity takes place among all. Thus it is that diſcernment, from its energy and quickneſs, often forms an eſtimate whoſe defects the underſtanding

ing is called in afterwards to ſupply. Cool and diſpaſſionate thought concentrates at laſt in one point of view whatever hath a tendency to eſtabliſh an hypotheſis, or to determine an opinion. But in either of theſe caſes an eye immediately fixed upon particular objects, of whatever importance, will overlook at the time circumſtances that reflection may afterwards ſuggeſt, but which could not have been then recollected without ſuppoſing that two powers of the mind, whoſe offices we have ſeen to be different, ſhould ſelect at the ſame inſtant objects of various natures; and ſhould act with an uniformity that is incompatiable with their diſtinct modes of operation.

3. We obſerved as a proof of the ſuperior comprehenſion of the faculty we are contemplating here, that it takes in a much larger and more diverſified ſeries of objects than that of reaſon conſidered by itſelf. The proof of this remark will lead us to take notice as the laſt inſtance of the difference betwixt theſe of the different natures of the objects ſelected by them. Here we muſt acknowledge, that while the man of

penetration

penetration (in the ſenſe given to that term in this work) judges of every point that is examined by the underſtanding, he is attentive to, and is qualified to decide on others of which the diſpaſſionate reaſoner takes not cognizance. This laſt indeed, judgeth with great juſtneſs and propriety of its own uſual operation on the human mind, in the ſame manner as a man who hath been long accuſtomed to obſerve the ſeveral expreſſions of his own countenance in a mirror, will be ſtruck with the ſame, or even with ſimilar characters in that of another. A *diſcerning* judge of mankind, is equally qualified when he ſuppreſſeth the influence of imagination on his deciſions, to judge of this matter as coolly as the reaſoner who traceth up effects deliberately to their cauſes; and by obſerving in what manner his own judgment operates when tried in various circumſtances, will form an adequate idea of the principal characters by which it is diſtinguiſhed. Of every other means by which the reaſoning faculty is rendered conſpicuous, we may in the ſame manner pronounce, that this intel-

lectual

lectual diſcernment is peculiarly qualified either to judge of, or to exerciſe it. It is otherwiſe with regard to the underſtanding, when we come to examine the more peculiar province of that power whoſe offices we are employed in contemplating. A man of deep penetration, and ſtrong ſenſibility, may reaſon ſolidly and calmly on ſubjects that demand to be laid open by cloſe argumentation; becauſe a very ſuperior ſhare of the power that employs this medium to effectuate its purpoſe, enters into his character. But is the abſtracted reaſoner, whoſe feelings perhaps are weak, and his paſſions ſubjected to the controul of reaſon at all times, able to detect with the ſame perſpicacity the cauſes of actions lying remote in the heart, and indicating certain powerful emotions with which he is wholly unacquainted?—Certainly not.—"Why?" Becauſe he hath here no principles upon which to proceed. He cannot in this, as in other inſtances, judge from *compariſon*, becauſe having never been ſenſible of the effect himſelf, which he is incapable perhaps of having

ſtrongly

ſtrongly excited, he has recourſe in vain to his own mind for any cauſe that may determine his judgment. In this caſe likewiſe he cannot diſcover the original principle by any proceſs of ratiocination, however accurate. The effects of the paſſions muſt be *known* in order to be deſcribed; and the feelings of a ſuſceptible heart are not to be laid open by any proceſs which the underſtanding carries on; but are *painted* by him who hath *experienced* their influence.

From theſe remarks we may diſcover the reaſon for which the obſervations and the precepts of many philoſophers on theſe laſt ſubjects, are conſidered as cold and unintereſting. A man of ſenſibility rejects with indignation the rules which he who appears to have no paſſions himſelf, lays down very calmly for reſtraining their exceſs. It is the *diſcerning mind* (as it may juſtly be denominated) which enters thoroughly into this matter, and counteracts moſt powerfully the influence of the paſſions by drawing a picture from experience of the manner in which they ope-

rate

rate on conduct. In this character the underſtanding and imagination concentrating their energy, the latter renders him to whom it belongs ſuſceptible of ſtrong impreſſions from the objects that paſs around him; and the former directs him to caſt off thoſe only which are of importance, as well as to combine their cauſes with other principles that give conſiſtency to the whole.

Hence we may trace to its original the difference betwixt the view which Iſocrates, and that which Homer preſents of human nature. Let us take an example from each, as this will illuſtrate the preceding obſervations. The epiſtle of the former, inſcribed to Demonicus, conſiſts principally of admonitions that regard his conduct in life. He deſires this young man particularly "to try to obtain a conqueſt over "thoſe things by which it is unworthy to "be held in ſubjection; ſuch as riches, "anger, pleaſure, and pain. This con-"queſt, ſays he, you will obtain with "regard to the firſt, if you conſider the "acquiſition of wealth rather as a mean

"to

" to encreaſe your glory, than to form a
" maſs of uſeleſs treaſure. You will ſub-
" due anger if you always acquit yourſelf
" to the perſon who hath given offence,
" as you would wiſh him in ſimilar cir-
" cumſtances to do to you. Your deſires
" you will hold perfectly in ſubjection, if
" you reflect properly how unbecoming
" it is, that he who commands others,
" ſhould himſelf be the ſlave of appetite
" and pleaſure. You will in the laſt place
" riſe ſuperior to the ſhock of adverſity,
" if you compare your own calamities
" with thoſe of others, and remember at
" all times that you are a man *."

Theſe

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* ΥΦ' ων κρατεισθαι την ψυχην αισχρον, τουτων εγκρατειαν ασκει ωαντων, κερδους, οργης, ηδονης, λυπης· Εση δε τοιυτος, ει κερδη μεν ειναι νομιζης δι' ων ευδοκιμησεις, αλλ' μη δι' ων ευπορησεις· Τη δε Οργη αν ωαραπλησιως εχης ωρος τυς αμαρτανοντας, ωσπερ αν ωρος σεαυτον αμαρτανοντα, και τυς αλλυς εχειν αξιωσεις. Ευ δε τοις Τερπνοις αναισχρον υπολαβης, των μεν οικειτων ΑΡΧΕΙΝ, ταις δε ηδοναις ΔΟΥΛΕΥΕΙΝ. Ευ δε τοις Λυωηροις, αν τας των αλλων ατυχιας επιβλεπης, και σεαυτον ως ανθρωπος, υπομιμνησκης. ΠΡΟΣ ΔΗΜΟΝΙΚ. Many of the Pythagorean

Theſe advices will be juſtly denominated judicious. But they are indeed " the ſug-

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gorean philoſophers, whoſe writings have reached the preſent times, lay down cold and general rules of the ſame kind with the former; which, though perfectly juſt and rational, can have no influence on practice. Καλον επι παντι το ΙΣΟΝ, Υπερβολη δε και Ελλειψις μοι δοκεει, ſays an ancient ſage (Democritus) of great eminence. Who diſputes the truth of this obſervation, or who receives benefit from knowing it? The ingenious Theophraſtus, in his piece entitled ΗΘΙΚΟΙ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΕΣ, purſues a very ſimple method in treating of the paſſions; but one that is much more likely to be of uſe. Proceeding upon the maxim that

Vice is a monſter of ſuch frightful mien,
As to be hated, needs but to be ſeen; POPE.

he goes no farther than giving a plain but full deſcription of the perſons in whom certain vices predominate; and of the effects by which the character may be known. Εκθησω δε σοι (ſays he to his friend) κατα γενος οσα τε τυγχανει γενη τροπων τουτοις προσκειμενα, και ου τροπον τη οικονομια χρωνται. In proem. Our author's plan is, in other words, to preſent to men in general a juſt picture of their faults and vices ſo clearly and forcibly drawn as that each may ſelect his own amidſt an aſſemblage ſo promiſcuous; and by ſeeing its deformity may be enabled to correct it. Such a repreſentation required knowledge of the human heart, and has obviouſly a ſtronger effect than any general admonition.

" geſtions

"geſtions of a mind at eaſe." What effect would they produce upon the angry man, the miſer, the voluptuary, or the head-ſtrong?—Whether ſuch general and unappropriated maxims would work any permanent effect upon practice, let the perſons who may be ſubject to theſe paſſions pronounce.—Let us next conſider in what manner Homer hath treated this ſubject.

That it is the purpoſe of the Iliad to expoſe the fatal conſequences that ariſe from the indulgence of anger, is known to every man who hath any acquaintance with that work. We are not here to ſhow how this author acquits himſelf in attacking the preſent paſſion, as a POET; but how he ſucceeds in his purpoſe conſidered as a philoſopher, and a man of diſcernment. The ninth book of this admired work (which perhaps has leſs than any of the others of purely poetic beauty) affords a ſtriking example of the preſent kind. In the various addreſſes made to Achilles by thoſe who propoſed to moderate his anger, obſerve the means that are applied for this purpoſe!—Ulyſſes recalls to his memory

memory the parting advice of his father Peleus, that he ought above all other things to repreſs *this* paſſion *; after having attempted to kindle every latent ſpark of commiſeration in the heart of this hero, by a pathetic detail of the miſeries of his country †. He tries to ſet one paſſion in oppoſition to another in his mind; and to overcome his reſentment by awaking the powerful ſtimulus of ambition ‡.

But in order to ſet the pernicious effects of this blind fury completely before us, Achilles, whom the eloquence of Ulyſſes

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* Ω πεπον, η μεν σοι γε πατηρ επετελλατο Πηλευς
Ηματι τω οτε εκ φθιης Αγαμεμνονι πεμπε·
Τεκνον εμον, καρτος μεν Αθηναιη τε και Ηρη
Δωσουσ' αικ' εθελωσι, συ δε μεγαλητορα θυμον
Ισχειν εν ςηθεσσι· ΦΙΛΟΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ ΓΑΡ ΑΜΕΙΝΩΝ.
ΙΛΙΑΔ. ι.

† —— Εκτωρ δε μεγα σθενει βλεμεαινων
Μαινεται εκπαγλως, πισυνος Διι, ουδε τι τιει
Ανερας ουδε θεους; κρατερη δε ε λυσσα δεδυκεν·
Στευται γαρ νηων αποκοψειν ακρα κορυμβα, &c. ib.

‡ —— συ δε αλλους περ' πανα χαιους
Τειρομενους ελεαιρε κατα ςρατον, οι σε θεον ως
Τισουσ' η γαρ κε σφι μαλα μεγα κυδος αροιο, &c.

could not move from his purpoſe, is next attacked by that of Phœnix, his tutor, his friend; whoſe age is reſpectable, and whoſe tears ſtream as he ſpeaks. Let any reader compare the arguments that are brought here againſt the indulgence of reſentment, with the *judicious* advice of the philoſopher, and judge which of the two beſt underſtood human nature *. The former writes like a man of good ſenſe †,

* It would have run this part of the work into unneceſſary length, to have mentioned the characters by which the addreſs of Phœnix is particularly diſtinguiſhed. The reader will find theſe, with every other eloquent beauty that occurs in this book, pointed out with great propriety in the notes of Mr. Pope's tranſlation.

† Quintilian aſſigns, with his uſual accuracy and diſcernment, the various ſpecies of argumentation by which reaſon obtains its purpoſe:—"Eſſe quædam reor (ſays he) in omni genere probationum communia. Nam nec ulla quæſtio eſt quæ non ſit aut in re, aut in perſona: nec eſſe argumentorum loci poſſunt, niſi in iis quæ rebus & perſonis accidunt. Eaque aut per ſe inſpici ſolent, aut ad aliud referri. Nec ulla confirmatio niſi ex antecedentibus, aut ex conſequentibus, aut ex repugnantibus. Et hæc neceſſe eſt, aut ex præterito tempore, aut ex conjuncto, aut ex ſequenti petere." Inſtit. lib. iv. c. 8.

whoſe

whoſe own paſſions were cool and ductile, and who formed a judgment of all others by himſelf. The latter, on the contrary, is a *penetrating* judge of his ſubject, deeply acquainted with the *heart* of man, and with the moſt powerful motive by which it is actuated *.—To what cauſe ought this ſtriking difference, ſo conſpicuous in the preſent inſtance, (and of which an intelligent reader may meet with many ſimilar examples) to be aſcribed?—Not ſurely to mere ſuperiority of underſtanding in the laſt; for of this faculty both Iſocrates, and other authors who lay down rules for the conduct of life, are acknowledged to have poſſeſſed a very eminent ſhare. Beſides, it is unqueſtionably certain, that this intellectual power often diſtinguiſheth in an high degree minds that are yet diſqualified to preſent ſuch a picture of the human heart as Homer hath here exhibited.

* "Ingenium *celeres* quidem motus ad excogitandum acute, & quædam intelligentiæ alacritas oſtendit. Judicium vero ſapiens animi *Mora*, & matura inter res plures eſtimatio oſtendet." Strad. Proluſ. 1 Orat.

Is it then to imagination that this effect is to be aſcribed?—Surely no man ever ſuppoſed that this power conſidered ſeparately from the other, can be the parent of thoſe expoſtulations that ſo powerfully impreſs the mind; and of that *deſign* which appears in the arrangement of various means, rendered ſubſervient without declination to an ultimate purpoſe. It follows then, that "there is a mental power dif-"ferent in its manner of operation, in its "extent of comprehenſion, and in its "choice of objects, from both thoſe whoſe "offices we have formerly examined; and "to this it is that we have here applied "the deſignation of the FACULTY of "DISCERNMENT *."

Since

* Should it be deemed neceſſary to trace the difference betwixt the diſcerning and the inventive faculty more particularly than hath been done in the text, we would obſerve, that as reaſon is diſtinguiſhed from the firſt of theſe in conſequence of its ſlow and deliberate procedure; imagination is equally ſo by its volatility, and its views that are equally indiſcriminate and ſuperficial. Diſcernment we have already ſeen, of whatever ſubject it takes cognizance, is always known by examining

Since therefore this quality differs in eſſential reſpects both from that of reaſon and of invention when viewed as independent of each other, as far as ſuch a view of them can be taken, it muſt obviouſly be conſtituted by the union of both; of whoſe influence reflection will ſhow it to participate in very different degrees. From the former it receives ſteadineſs, ſolidity, a proper direction, and a power of ſelecting the moſt unexceptionable means. From

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examining it to the bottom; and by ſeizing in every caſe ſuch means as are moſt proper to obtain an ultimate end. Imagination, on the contrary, if left wholly to itſelf, would neither propoſe to accompliſh any *eligible* end, nor diſcover perſpicacity in the choice of means. When its prevalence over the reaſoning power is remarkable in any inſtance, it will be fixed in ſome caſes rather by the brilliance and drapery of objects, than by their importance: in others, when the proſpect is more uniform, no parts will be diſcovered to have comparative excellence. In all caſes whatever, its courſe, wholly different from that which the diſcerning mind purſues, will be excentric and irregular. Its light likewiſe inſtead of diſplaying parts of principal beauty or utility in a work, muſt loſe its influence by being indiſcriminately and promiſcuouſly reflected over all.

the latter is derived its quickneſs, perſpicacity, and almoſt intuitive perception of character and manners. By the underſtanding a *penetrating* judge diſcovers the purport of arguments as leading to ſome principle: while by the inventive faculty co-operating in this work, its *ſight is ſharpened* (if that expreſſion may be uſed) with regard to *particular objects*, without being impaired in the leaſt degree as to general extent and comprehenſion. Thus we ſee by what means the mind fixeth at once upon *deciſive criteria*; and imagination with all its natural volatility is rendered ſubſervient to the important purpoſe either of clearing, or of inveſtigating truth.

Again, when the various emotions of the heart are to be traced to their ſources, as ariſing from one paſſion upon ſome occaſions, and upon others from a mixture extremely complicated *; in theſe caſes, when

* A conſummate judge of mankind carries the ſource of action here mentioned ſo far, as to derive from it principally not only the actions but the opinions of

when the ſuperior mental powers are united in ſuch a manner as conſtitutes Diſcernment; the cauſes which fancy would have ſcanned very ſlightly, if not wholly overlooked, will be thoroughly inveſtigated; and teſts drawn from the ſureſt of evidences, I mean thoſe of feeling and experience, will be applied to eſtimate their ſtability and power. It is indeed in this laſt light, as was formerly obſerved, that penetration is principally conſpicuous, as mere judgment, and mere imagination, with regard to ſuch objects, is equally deficient. For the underſtanding of an individual proceeds not beyond the ſober track of reaſoning upon facts or principles eſtabliſhed by itſelf; or of examining the juſtneſs of ſuch reaſoning eſtabliſhed upon

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of mankind. "Nec eſt enim in dicendo majus, quam ut faveat oratori is qui audiet; utque ipſe ſic moveatur, ut impetu quodam animi, magis quam judicio, aut concilio regatur. Plura enim multo homines judicant odio, aut amore, aut cupiditate, aut iracundia, aut dolore, aut lætitia, aut ſpe, aut timore, aut aliqua permonitione mentis, quam veritate aut præſcripto, aut juris norma aliqua, aut judicii formula, aut legibus." Cicer. de Orat. lib. ii.

ſimilar facts and principles by that of another. Of the paſſions and affections it judgeth philoſophically by attending to their moſt uſual phenomena in life. But when effects are derived from theſe united with imagination, and impelled by it *, the man of mere reaſon, however comprehenſive, being deſtitute himſelf of feelings that correſpond to ſuch as this union produceth, is evidently deprived of the principles upon which an eſtimate can be formed, or an enquiry conducted.

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* It is in this caſe that ſuch a conflict of jarring paſſions is often excited, that the niceſt Diſcernment, when tracing effects to their originals in ſo promiſcuous an aſſemblage, is often ſcarce adequate to the taſk of obſerving the effects that ariſe from paſſions, with whoſe uſual operation, when each is examined apart, it is thoroughly acquainted. It is well obſerved by a modern critic on this point. "Entre ces obſtacles qui ruinent les paſſions, les paſſions memes ne ſont pas le moindres. Les uns combattent & detruiſent les autres: & ſi l'on met enſemble un ſujet de joïe & un ſujet de triſteſſe, on ne ſera bien ſentir aucune des deux. Horace nous avertit que tout la licence poetique ne s'etende point juſqu'a ce melange." Boſſu du Poeme Epique liv. iii. p. 354.

II. Having

II. Having thus endeavoured to ſhow in what reſpects the diſcerning faculty differs from the principal powers of the mind conſidered ſingly; and in what manner it is conſtituted by their union, we come next to conſider its peculiar province when it is viewed as influencing the various ſpecies of Compoſition. It hath been already obſerved, that "when a large proportion "of the inventive is combined with a "much greater ſhare of the reaſoning fa-"culty, to which laſt therefore it is ſub-"ſervient, the intellectual eye will moſt "commonly take cognizance of that diſ-"quiſition which is directed by the under-"ſtanding." It is thus that philoſophical diſcernment is conſtituted. A ſhare, on the other hand, of imagination more adequate to that of reaſon in a mind diſtinguiſhed eminently by both, renders the influence of Diſcernment more conſpicuous and univerſal than in the firſt inſtance; becauſe "it appears in this caſe with equal advan-"tage when judging of the arts, as of "the inveſtigations of ſcience, and can "pronounce as properly of what is *beau-*

"*tiful*

" *tiful* in the one, as of what is *juſt* and " *deciſive* in the other." In theſe two general lights we propoſe here to take a view of this intellectual quality, as we ſhall thus be able to determine its office with preciſion as far as the preſent ſubject is concerned.

1. Diſcernment when turned to philoſophical diſquiſition, not only ſuggeſts to a man the trueſt and happieſt method of treating his ſubject, as ſoon as he hath acquired a general knowledge of it; but it enables him likewiſe to fix upon the moſt deciſive evidence; to adopt the moſt ſignificant illuſtrations; and to confirm his hypotheſis where proof is moſt neceſſary, by obſerving and ſuperſeding objections.

We have already conſidered the underſtanding as the parent of exact methodical arrangement; a criterion from which we juſtly form a judgment of its clearneſs and comprehenſion. There is, however, as we may learn from experience, a certain " curioſa felicitas," as it may be termed, the art of diſpoſition; a certain happy manner of putting facts or circumſtances together,

together, which we never meet with but among writers of diſtinguiſhed *penetration*, in the ſenſe that is here given to that term. What is it that renders the diſcourſes of Plato on valour, friendſhip, death, immortality, &c. ſo much more agreeable than thoſe of other philoſophers who have examined the ſame ſubjects? Every reader muſt be ſenſible that this is owing in a great meaſure to the manner in which he hath diſpoſed his ſentiments on theſe ſubjects. Inſtead of attending wholly to what it may be juſt neceſſary to advance on one point, and proceeding immediately to another, this author often takes ſo large a circuit at his firſt ſetting out, that we are at a loſs to determine at what point his proceſs will terminate. By keeping the mind in ſuſpence, he in this manner irreſiſtibly fixeth its attention; and while he is ſometimes apparently negligent of cloſe methodical arrangement, accompliſheth all the ends to which it is ſubſervient; along with another important purpoſe which attention to perfect regugularity contributes not to bring about.

The

The illuſtrious Roman orator and philoſopher has wrote a treatiſe entitled, De Natura Deorum, which has reached the preſent times. The ſame ſubject is treated by Phurnutus, a Greek philoſopher, who explains very ſuccinctly, and at the ſame time with much perſpicuity, the various parts of nature which the deities repreſented. Yet the firſt of theſe (though not the moſt ſhining of Cicero's writings) is univerſally known: the laſt is as much neglected. The reaſon is, that the Roman, who is formed in a great meaſure upon the Athenian philoſopher formerly referred to, rangeth his diverſified materials in ſuch a manner as that theſe throw mutual light upon each other; and by going out of his way as it might ſeem, upon ſome occaſions, to bring illuſtrations of his ſentiments, he keeps attention always awake while a ſucceſſion of pleaſing ideas paſſeth before the imagination*. The other, on the

* The beautiful verſes which he is ſuppoſed to have taken from the Medea of Accius, to mention no other proof of this kind, forms one of the moſt agreeable illuſtrations.

the contrary, juſt diſpatcheth his buſineſs in the feweſt words, and without taking any compaſs to give a beautiful variety to his Compoſition, purſues one topic with the ſame uniform brevity, after he hath finiſhed a former.

What ſhall we ſay of theſe writers when thus compared together?—That the laſt mentioned treats his ſubject like a man of underſtanding, who comprehends and unfolds it with perſpicuity. But the former are *diſcerning* judges of human nature, who keep in their eye the complicated qualities of which characters are formed; and in order to accompliſh a purpoſe with one of

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illuſtrations. De Natur. Deor. lib. ii. At other times when talking of the myſterious conduct of the deity, he has recourſe, with great knowledge of human nature, to examples that were recent to his readers in order to illuſtrate his ſentiments on this perplexing ſubject. "Cur omnium crudeliſſimus (ſays he) tamdiu Cinna regnavit?—At dedit poenas.—Prohiberi melius fuit, impedirique, ne tot ſummos viros interficeret, quam ipſe aliquando poenas dare," &c. We are not here entering into the propriety or juſtice of theſe ſentiments. Our buſineſs is only to take notice of the manner in which they are laid down and illuſtrated.

theſe

theſe effectually, judge it proper to have recourſe alternately to each *.

2. As the faculty here examined directs to the happieſt method of treating a ſubject, ſo it fixeth likewiſe in the conduct of argumentation, upon the moſt deciſive evidence. This end it effectuates by enabling a writer, as was formerly obſerved, "*to hit upon that particular point upon which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends* *." That it

* It is the ſame in hiſtory as in philoſophy. The man of judgment will relate facts with great perſpicuity, and will accompany theſe with ſolid and edifying obſervations. But there is a method of inſtructing and fatiguing the mind at the ſame time; and where theſe two accompany each other, the ſphere of the former muſt be very much contracted. This happens when there is an uniform recital of facts and obſervations drawn from theſe regularly carried on; the remarks always ſucceeding the narration of events periodically, inſtead of being happily interwoven with it, ſo as to grow as it were out of the action, and to be purſued no farther than as it ſerves for illuſtration. Among modern hiſtorians who have fixed on the ſame general ſubject, Rapin and Hume are the hiſtorians of England. The firſt is a circumſtantial and judicious writer,

it is the peculiar province of the diſcerning faculty to fix upon theſe points in the conduct

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writer, whoſe relation of facts is both diſtinct and particular; and whoſe obſervations on theſe are uſually juſt and natural. In peruſing his extenſive work we find one uniform method invariably purſued. The tranſactions are firſt related at full length. The remarks on theſe are commonly placed by themſelves likewiſe, ſo that the reader is never at a loſs in the narration to know what will be the ſtrain of a whole paragraph, unmixed with incidental ſentiment or illuſtration, by caſting his eye on the margin. This ſtiff method of procedure renders this valuable work tedious and unintereſting to readers who deſire to be entertained as well as edified in reading hiſtory, and who neglect the *uſeful* when the *agreeable* is not united with it. The detail of events in Hume's Hiſtory (which taken altogether is, in the author's opinion, one of the moſt complete performances of its kind) is much more conciſe. But he fixeth with great propriety upon circumſtances that render us acquainted at once with the manners of the times and with the characters of the principal perſonages. Theſe, in conſequence of their own importance, and of the obſervations that are happily thrown into the narration without *breaking* it, form altogether an highly intereſting exhibition. We are pleaſed with the hiſtorian's arrangement of ſuch various materials, as well as with their ſelection, and conſider the end of hiſtory as accompliſhed by the whole. The inference deducible here with regard to the

duct of evidence, will be obvious, when we reflect upon what hath been already ſaid on its uſual manner of operation. We obſerved, as one of the moſt diſtinguiſhing criteria of this power, that as ſoon as a ſubject is laid down, it comprehends the moſt proper manner of treating it without any tedious proceſs of reaſoning, by *fixing upon the points that are of principal importance.*

Upon weighing therefore the evidence by which any doubtful point is to be eſtabliſhed, the man of Diſcernment perceives immediately, not merely the force of one argument compared with another in bringing his proof to perfection; but that particular one which hath peculiar energy, as conveying an idea in the cleareſt and moſt forcible manner to the mind. Thus it happens, that in canvaſſing a queſtion, ſuch a man throws out at once every thing that is frivolous, and abſolutely foreign to the purpoſe. Perceiving

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the *judgment* of one writer and the *diſcernment* of the other, is too obvious upon the principles laid down in this work to be particularly inſiſted on.

immediately

immediately in what manner each reaſon or motive may be moſt powerfully enforced or applied, he bends the whole force of his talents to the accompliſhment of that purpoſe; and in this manner hits the point upon which the proof may be ſaid to reſt as being deciſive of its propriety; and which, when once placed clearly before the mind, ſuperſedes the uſe of any ſubſequent enlargement. The influence of the ſuperior intellectual powers acting in combination here is obvious. The underſtanding, ſharpened and animated in its procedure, by being united with a vigorous imagination, ſees at once the full effect of an important circumſtance, which without this union it would have diſcovered by a gradual and circumſtantial diſquiſition. It rejects therefore as frivolous, arguments whoſe tendency is not ſo immediately perceptible, or which lie more open to exceptions; a while it contemplates ſuch as have the moſt laſting effect, the inventive power ſupplies the means of enforcing theſe with ſuitable energy, and of rendering their influence complete.

3. That the diſcerning faculty therefore will likewiſe ſuggeſt amidſt various objects of illuſtration, thoſe that have the greateſt ſignificance when applied to certain motives or arguments, is a point that admits of very eaſy proof. It is fancy that invents theſe illuſtrations, and it is to judgment that we owe their proper application. This laſt power never fails to ſelect ſuch as are moſt appropriated to their objects, when imagination preſents before it a diverſified aſſemblage. When this laſt is languid and enervated, its exertions, whatever ſtrength the underſtanding may poſſeſs, muſt be proportionably feeble; and while we are impreſſed ſuitably by the ſentiments that are dictated by one faculty, we muſt at the ſame time be ſenſible, that it cannot illuſtrate theſe by ſignificant alluſions, when there is a defect in that power from which they are derived.

Hence we may diſcover the cauſe for which many excellent philoſophical performances are deficient in thoſe expreſſive images which give perſpicuity as well as beauty to Compoſition. The judgment of the

the writer is conſpicuous in the whole execution. But having either never received from nature any ſuitable proportion of imagination, or having neglected to cultivate it, he either makes feeble attempts to imitate an excellence of which he perceives the uſe; or dropping it altogether, he mars the purpoſe which he propoſed ultimately to bring about. It is therefore in conſequence of that union of the intellectual powers which conſtitutes Diſcernment, that the moſt ſignificant illuſtrations are ſelected as much in philoſophical as in any other ſpecies of Compoſition, and are applied to their correſponding originals.

4. We obſerved in the laſt place, that it is the diſcerning faculty by which a philoſopher is enabled moſt effectually to perceive and to ſuperſede objections to which his theory may lie open. We do not here mean to affirm that a man poſſeſſed of this mental quality even in the higheſt degree, will be capable to detect every real, and far leſs every frivolous exception that may tend to invalidate his poſitions. Of the firſt, it is undoubtedly proper that

ſuch as have importance ſhould be perceived and removed. With regard to the others, an author would take up both his own and his readers attention to very little purpoſe, who ſhould ſeriouſly attempt to obviate theſe, even ſuppoſing him to have obſerved them.—But in order fully to comprehend the province of Diſcernment in this ſphere of its exertion, we muſt enter more particularly into the ſubject.

The objections conſidered in general to which propoſitions that require to be confirmed or illuſtrated lie open, are principally of the following kinds. Either theſe are ſuch as muſt occur to every mind upon the firſt propoſal of a ſubject, and ſuch therefore as it obviouſly ſuggeſts; or though not thus immediately perceived, they are ſeen to ariſe naturally from the various ſubdiviſions of a general plan, as an author may take theſe up ſucceſſively in the courſe of his examination;—or, laſtly, they are of that kind which ariſe from particular cauſes that operate within a narrow compaſs, and though of the utmoſt conſequence when ſtrenuouſly urged,

would

would elude the ſcrutiny of the far greater number of mankind.

Let us ſuppoſe, in order to exemplify theſe obſervations, that a writer takes for his ſubject the paſſions of human nature, and the neceſſity there is for keeping them in ſubjection. After having expoſed the evils unavoidably ariſing from an indulgence of theſe, when carried to exceſs; every man will be ready to object, as ſoon as the means of ſubduing them begin to be propoſed, the weakneſs and imperfection of the human mind, which renders the language of the poet that of man in general,

Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora ſequor.

This therefore is a plea which would be univerſally urged againſt all his arguments, and ſuch as, if paſſed over without an attempt to obviate, would render his rules, however excellent and judiciouſly diſpoſed, of no effect.

Having therefore guarded as much as poſſible againſt the force of this objection which ſtrikes at his general plan, he pro-

ceeds to conſider the paſſions as diſtinguiſhed ſeparately from each other, and to aſcertain the influence, deſign, and tendency of each. Here the pleas which every man is ready to urge in defence of that paſſion which predominates in his own mind, will fall naturally under his conſideration as objections againſt the reaſons that he may advance for limiting its dominion. Theſe it will be obſerved are leſs univerſal than the former; and though ſtrenuouſly ſupported by ſuch as are intereſted particularly in the cauſe, are however of a different kind from thoſe in which all would conſider themſelves as concerned in general. A man of ſolid and comprehenſive underſtanding, as he would be immediately on his guard againſt an objection of the firſt kind in treating this ſubject, as well as qualified to remove it, ſo he would probably ſuggeſt with equal ſucceſs many of the excuſes by which the indulgence of certain paſſions is vindicated, and would ſhow their inefficacy. But according to the degree in which the power of a paſſion or prejudice is felt by ſome minds,

minds, will be the ſubtlety and acuteneſs with which its indulgence is defended. For before men are ſubdued ſo thoroughly by their paſſions, as to permit theſe to dictate a ſyſtem of principles ſuited to their conduct, they attempt to reconcile, by every plauſible argument that reflection may ſuggeſt, certain deviations from rectitude, occaſioned by the prevalence of one paſſion, to the temperate dictates of reaſon; and inveſtigate every motive that is brought to oppoſe their deſire, with a ſeverity that is encreaſed by the ſtrong inclination they feel to look upon it as irrational.

In this ſituation therefore, objections different from either of the former kinds will naturally be propoſed againſt our philoſopher's own arguments, which ought on that account to ariſe from a thorough knowledge not only of the ſubject in general, but of the nature and effects of that powerful propenſity whoſe exerciſe he propoſeth to limit. But how ſhall he be enabled to carry on ſuch cogent and forcible reaſoning as muſt here be requiſite?— Undoubtedly by being capable of placing

himſelf, by an effort of imagination, in the circumſtances of him who is ſtrongly actuated by a particular paſſion; and by feeling (if we may thus expreſs it) its temporary influence. Thus he will be able as clearly and forcibly to expoſe the effects of particular paſſions when indulged to an extreme, as by ſuperſeding every objection he would moſt effectually accompliſh the purpoſe that is ultimately kept in view.

But by what power of the mind is this end brought about?—Not ſurely by the underſtanding alone. For if it be neceſſary that he who deſcribes the effects ariſing from indulged paſſion, ſhould place himſelf in the circumſtances of a man who is ſtrongly actuated by it; this faculty, whoſe procedure is cautious and deliberate, would fail of preſenting ſituations of this kind with ſufficient ſtrength and comprehenſion to do juſtice to each. Men of judgment (in the proper acceptation of that term) who have themſelves very moderate paſſions are ſurely ill qualified to deſcribe an exceſs which they never felt; or in other words, to do juſtice to a ſub-

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ject into which they are not qualified to enter. Their account therefore of it could not be ſuch as would exclude the objections of thoſe who more thoroughly underſtood the queſtion. It is, as we have obſerved, by an effort of imagination which always gives ſtrength to the paſſions, that circumſtances of the preſent kind are repreſented with adequate energy. Theſe when placed in a ſtrong point of view by it, are diſpoſed in ſuch a manner by the faculty of reaſon which accompanies the whole likewiſe with ſuch juſt obſervations, as carry conviction moſt powerfully to the mind. But as neither power can accompliſh this end ſeparately it muſt obviouſly be effected by that influence of both, which we have ſhown to conſtitute Diſcernment. It is therefore this mental power whoſe nature and province we have endeavoured to lay open, that ſuggeſts often the happieſt method of treating a philoſophical ſubject, fixeth on the moſt deciſive evidence, ſelects the moſt ſignificant illuſtrations, and moſt completely obviates objections.

In

In the whole conduct of this procedure we muſt obſerve, that though the concurrence of reaſon and imagination exiſting in an eminent degree is neceſſary to effectuate the purpoſes here mentioned. Yet the principal exertions are made by the former. The latter (as we ſhall ſee afterwards) though making much more ſtrenuous efforts in other departments of literature, and ſuch as obviouſly point to it as their original; yet is limited here in its range, and fixed down to the contemplation of ſuch objects only as the underſtanding admits to have propriety in the inveſtigation of truth. It may therefore be adequate to theſe ends though conferred in a very inferior degree to that with which it co-operates; and in any caſe muſt act according to eſtabliſhed and determined rules.

III. Having thus endeavoured to point out particularly the nature and characteriſtical marks of philoſophical Diſcernment, it remains only in order to complete our view of this faculty, that we conſider its influence when the reaſoning and inventive

tive powers are more adequate to each other; or at leaſt when this laſt in whatever degree it takes place, extending its ſurvey under the direction of judgment to a greater variety of objects than in the former inſtance; the mind judgeth as properly of what is beautiful in the arts, as of what is juſt and deciſive in the reſearches of ſcience. This branch of our ſubject we ſhall have occaſion to diſcuſs ſo much at large in a ſubſequent ſection, when we come to trace that combination of the intellectual powers which gives riſe to the arts of poetry and criticiſm; that we ſhall only make ſome general obſervations here in order to determine the peculiar province and importance of the faculty, whoſe nature and offices we have endeavoured to diſplay. Let us then conſider in what manner he who poſſeſſeth a great and proportioned ſhare both of underſtanding and of imagination, will form his eſtimate both of the *genius* of an author, and of the excellence or defects of a performance, in which this uncommon character is diſplayed.

1. Diſcern-

1. Diſcernment we have already ſeen, is diſtinguiſhed by no circumſtance more remarkably than its power of entering into a character, when ſupplied only with ſlight materials, and ſuch as an ordinary mind would wholly overlook. Its effects conſidered in this point of view are uniform. It is the ſame ſagacity by which, in the commerce of life, a man judgeth of the heart or intentions of another from openings that eſcape the greater number of mankind *; which, transferred to Compoſition, renders him a judge of the degree in which the intellectual powers ſubſiſt, and of their particular propenſity from ſmall, and, as they might be deemed, frivolous indications. Thus it is that a diſcerning critic, attentive to the firſt dawning of genius, will diſcover in a few looſe thoughts thrown out without much connection, the characters of an accurate or comprehenſive underſtanding; and from a few ſtrokes in the ſame manner of pathos or of deſcription, will judge of the future

* See ſect. i. p. 11. and ſect. iv.

extent,

extent, fertility, and even of the characteriſtical bias of imagination. The circumſtances from which a penetrating judge will form his opinions on theſe points vary according to the ſtrength of his diſcernment, and the faculty that influenceth his deciſions. Some of theſe are, the models or patterns which a young genius ſelects for imitation, the vein of reflection into which he falls moſt naturally, as either carried on with cloſe philoſophical accuracy, or laying open, though without much regularity the internal feelings and affections; the images employed for illuſtration, as either drawn from remote ſources, or from the ſimpleſt forms of external nature:—in fine, the expreſſion of a work as either florid, creeping, correct, or inflated. From theſe and other circumſtances, which we need not mention more minutely, the ſuperior faculties when acting in vigorous concurrence form a judgment of the character while yet but beginning to open, which we pronounce to ariſe from intellectual Diſcernment.

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As imagination muſt make a ſtrenuous effort in the mind that judgeth from theſe circumſtances of a character, it muſt be proportioned in degree to the underſtanding, which laſt, when greatly ſuperior in this reſpect, is apt to repreſs the ardor of its companion, and alter the manner of its procedure.

2. It is in conſequence of a ſimilar combination that we judge properly of the excellence or defects of works in which genius is diſplayed. As this extraordinary character is principally ſaid to take place from the prevalence of effects that owe their origin to imagination; this power it undoubtedly is that feels their full force, and when united with that of reaſon, enables a man to diſcern their expedience in the various ſpecies of Compoſition. The man of Diſcernment therefore, when judging of works that are diſtinguiſhed by ingenuity, is he who by the exerciſe of an imagination congenial to that of the author, is powerfully impreſſed by ſtrokes that have original beauty; and is qualified

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to obſerve the heightning which this beauty receives from correſponding diction, fitneſs of illuſtration, and viewed as connected with other circumſtances from propriety of diſpoſition. A more particular account of the manner in which the diſcerning faculty operates in the extenſive field that is here opened to it, belongs more properly to a ſubſequent ſection.

We have now endeavoured to lay before the reader ſuch obſervations on the nature of this power of the mind in general, and of its more peculiar influence on the preſent ſubject in particular, as that he may judge of its manner of forming deciſions, as well as of their juſtneſs and importance. The author of this eſſay is no friend to the practice of *multiplying diſtinctions* upon every occaſion, as theſe are often ſubſervient to no other end than that of perplexing, inſtead of informing the mind, and are indeed introduced principally at many times, perhaps to bring the writer off when he is embarraſſed, or to gratify his vanity. When merely nominal, they

are

are ſpecious trifles. But when they ſerve to mark that point at which objects of ſimilar natures differ eſſentially from each other, they are of real utility, as they at the ſame time enable the mind to think with preciſion, and enlarge its ſphere of inveſtigation. The uſe of a juſt diſtinction becomes ſtill more conſpicuous than in this general inſtance, when the things diſtinguiſhed from each other are to be conſidered as the cauſes of various and important conſequences, which laſt cannot otherwiſe be traced up to their proper originals. From his belief that this is neceſſary in the preſent caſe, the author has taken a larger view of the ſphere appropriated to the diſcerning faculty than of any other intellectual power, and ſuch as is not *wholly* preſcribed by his ſubject. He hath ſo often obſerved the term *diſcerning* applied to denominate a ſimple act of the underſtanding by philoſophers, and the effects of both powers aſcribed indiſcriminately to one, that an attempt to lay open their diſtinct natures, provinces, and manners

ners of operation, he hopes may be of ſome uſe, if not as a full diſplay of the ſubject, yet as an opinion that may be followed into a larger and more diverſified field by thoſe who ſtudy the philoſophy of the Mind.

SECTION V.

Of the Uſe of Memory in Compoſition.

OUR view of the intellectual powers as employed in Compoſition, would juſtly be deemed incomplete, if we do not conſider that by which ideas are treaſured in the mind, and without whoſe influence the others can effectuate no purpoſe. The importance of this valuable quality in all caſes whatever is indeed ſo obvious, that it hath been the care of mankind in every age to extend its influence where it is originally vigorous, or to ſupply its weakneſs where it is naturally deficient. Whether indeed we behold it as the parent of experience, and by that means of ſuch in-

veſtigation as is derived from this ſource *, or as a requiſition particularly neceſſary to ſuch as would excel in arts that include a compaſs of diverſified objects †; whether we view it as an indication of, and attendant on genius ‡, or finally, when improved to the utmoſt by art, as capable of being rendered ſubſervient to purpoſes the moſt beneficial §;—in all theſe ſenſes its various

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* Γιγνεται δ'εκ της μνημης εμπειρια τοις ανθρωποις. Αι γαρ πολλαι μνημαι τυ αυτυ πραγματος μιας εμπειριας δυναμιν αποτελουσι· και δοκει σχεδον επιστημη και τεχνη ομοιον ειναι η εμπειρια· Αποβαινει δ'επιστημη και τεχνη δια της εμπειριας τοις ανθρωποις, &c. ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. Μεταφυσικ. Βιβ. Α. Κεφ. α.

† "Quid dicam de theſauro rerum omnium memoria? quæ niſi cuſtos inventis cogitatiſque rebus & verbis adhibeatur, intelligimus omnia, etiamſi præclariſſima in oratore peritura?—Quamobrem mirari deſinamus quæ cauſa ſit eloquentium paucitatis." Cicer. de Orat. lib. i.

‡ "Memoria autem facit etiam prompti ingenii famam, ut illa quæ dicimus non domo attuliſſe, ſed ibi protinus ſumpſiſſe videamur, quod & Oratori, & ipſi cauſæ plurimum confert." Quint. Inſtitut. lib. ii. cap. 11.

§ "Neque tamen ambigimus, quin poſſint præſtare per eam (Memoriam ſc.) nonnulla mirabilia & portentoſa." Bac. de Augmen. Scient. lib. v. c. 5.

offices

offices will require explanation as a neceſſary branch of the preſent enquiry. Before, however, we conſider this faculty as more immediately regarding Compoſition, it will be proper to make ſome general obſervations on its nature and effects.

1. It is commonly thought that a memory uncommonly extenſive, if it is not incompatible either with ſolidity of judgment, or with vigour of imagination, yet is rarely united with theſe in any eminent degree *. This maxim however, ſupported as it is by cuſtom and prepoſſeſſion, is one of thoſe which will not ſtand the teſt of cloſe inveſtigation. Thus far indeed, we may allow the laſt part of it to be well founded, that men of abſtracted and ſpeculative minds appear often to be abſent and inattentive to common occurrences:—the incidents about which the buſy part of mankind are intereſted, make but a very ſlight impreſſion on their

* —— in the ſoul while memory prevails,
The ſolid power of underſtanding fails;
Where beams of warm imagination play,
The memory's ſoft figures melt away. POPE.

thoughts, and are therefore ſoon eraſed beyond the power of recollection. But this, when properly examined, will be found to proceed not from a defect of Memory, but from want of attention. The ſpeculatiſt who found this charge brought againſt him might with great juſtice retort the accuſation, by ſaying, that the ſame defect of remembrance which might be imputed to him in the one of theſe provinces, would be transferred to his accuſers in the other. Nay, in this laſt caſe, the charge will fall much more heavily upon the man of the world (as he is called) than in the former upon the man of ſpeculation, as the former would probably be much more deficient in recollecting abſtracted truths which he had read with liſtleſſneſs, (even ſuppoſing him to have comprehended theſe) or even a ſtroke of pathos which he had paſſed over without emotion, than the latter would be in recalling to his memory events, in which, however unimportant, he muſt after all be intereſted in ſome degree as a member of ſociety.

Theſe general remarks on the power of recollection will explain to us the reaſon for which it is conſidered as more mechanical than any of the others, and more ſuſceptible of improvement from application and exerciſe *. To accompliſh this end nothing

* This conſideration has given riſe to thoſe expedients for extending memory, which, when rightly uſed, are indeed extremely valuable, but when the underſtanding is defective render a man contemptible. "Nam ingentem numerum nominum (ſays the penetrating philoſopher formerly quoted) aut verborum ſemel recitatorum eodem ordine ſtatim repetere aut verſus complures de quovis argumento ex tempore conficere, aut quicquid occurrit ſatyrica aliqua ſimilitudine perſtringere, aut ſeria quæque in jocum vertere, aut contradictione, & cavillatione quidvis eludere, & ſimilia (quorum in facultatibus animi haud exigua eſt copia, quæque ingenio & exercitatione ad miraculum uſque extolli poſſunt) hæc certe omnia, & his ſimilia nos non majoris facimus quam funambulorum & mimorum agilitates & ludicra. Etenim eædem ferme res ſunt, cum hæc corporis, illa animi viribus abutantur; & admirationis forſitan aliquid habeant, dignitatis parum." De Augment. Scient. ubi ſup. From this paſſage, which is worthy of its author, we may judge in what manner memory will exert itſelf when the ſuperior faculties of the mind are deficient, and thus

nothing is more neceſſary than that a man ſhould be able to transfer his attention from one ſet of objects to another, not perhaps originally ſo agreeable, but to which he becomes ſo much reconciled by inflexible perſeverance, that what was at firſt the effect of neceſſity becomes at laſt the object of deliberate ſelection. The ſame motive therefore by which he was impelled to one purſuit taking place with

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diſtinguiſh its effects when it is a repoſitory of indiſcriminate ideas thrown together without order or proportion; from its real utility when (though perhaps equally extenſive as in the former caſe) its ideas are properly regulated by a clear and comprehenſive underſtanding. From its precipitance and trifling in the firſt of theſe inſtances, it is however ſomewhat too haſty in concluding, as we are apt to do in general, that becauſe Memory may ſometimes contribute to ſhow the defects rather than the excellence of a character, that therefore a very large proportion of it indicates the weakneſs of any intellectual power whatever. This habit of drawing general concluſions from one or two particular inſtances, will open an inlet to a variety of errors, and is equally unjuſt in moſt caſes as it would be to conclude, that every man who practiſed the duties of religion was an hypocrite, becauſe a few had concealed many vices under the maſque of devotion.

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regard to another, the memory becomes at once a laſting repoſitory of new ideas, and is thus gradually rendered comprehenſive by an eaſy and imperceptible proceſs.

Suppoſing then this uſeful power of the mind to receive improvement more or leſs durable, in proportion to thoſe degrees of attention which different purſuits are calculated to excite, it is obvious that its principal dependence muſt be upon that faculty whoſe peculiar province it is to *arreſt attention* by energy, pathos, and vigour of deſcription.—So far therefore is memory from being impaired by ſtrength and exuberance of imagination, that the beams of this ſun ſerve to give ſtrength, expreſſion, and duration to its figures rather than to melt theſe away, (as Pope moſt poetically expreſſeth it) and its objects like diamonds of the pureſt water, reflect the ray with advantage, from which was originally derived their conſiſtence and beauty.

A very plain example will ſerve to illuſtrate the preceding obſervations. A man of taſte and judgment who is at one time entertained by the recital of a beautiful

poem in the cloſet, and at another by hearing an elegant and judicious ſermon from the pulpit, will perhaps (though his opportunities are the ſame with regard to both) remember afterwards many of the moſt ſtriking paſſages of the former, when thoſe of the latter are wholly obliterated.—Suppoſing however the preacher to be a man of a character in all reſpects preciſely ſimilar to his own, I would aſk, from whence does it ariſe that his memory is more tenacious than that of the former, and that perhaps only in the ſphere in which he is intereſted by his profeſſion? It will be acknowledged readily, that a public ſpeaker will not only retain what he has compoſed himſelf and has impreſſed upon his memory by application, but that ſtrokes of eloquence, which another might overlook, will be recollected by him, and will form the models of his imitation. Is it not evident that the former of theſe, being left wholly to his own direction, finds thoſe objects make the deepeſt impreſſion that are illuſtrated by the colouring of imagination; while the latter being compelled

compelled to ſtrike into another path, finds his powers of recollection improved by exerciſe in the one ſphere, while theſe at the ſame time are in no degree weakened in the other?—In both theſe perſons however (ſuppoſed to be naturally of characters preciſely ſimilar) the mind will retain unalterably its original bias, and though ſuſceptible in one caſe of more diverſified objects, yet will ſtill be moſt eaſily impreſſed by thoſe on which *poetic* expreſſion, or ſtrength of imagery confers peculiar ſignificance.

It is therefore obvious that as Memory is by no means naturally ſubverſive either of judgment or imagination; ſo theſe on the other hand are ſo far from being incompatible with it, that this laſt acquires its extent by an effort of the one, and becomes tenacious of particular objects in conſequence of being accompanied by the other. In fact, nothing is more ridiculous than thoſe idle, and frequently affected complaints which many perſons make ſo often of their defect in remembrance. Becauſe perhaps they may have known men eminently

eminently poſſeſſed of this power who enjoyed at the ſame time no proportioned ſhare of ſuch as are deemed more eſſential, they abſurdly conclude that the united concurrence of all is never to be expected; and by giving up all pretenſions to that which nature has conferred upon them, they may in reality be diſclaiming the only quality by which they were entitled to approbation or eſteem. Such men ought to reflect that as memory becomes comprehenſive where it is originally weak by a ſteady and reſolute exertion of reaſon, and as it never fails where imagination ſubſiſts in any high degree to retain thoſe ſtrokes of nature and paſſion of which it is the parent; ſo the man who proclaims his defect in this faculty acknowledgeth at the ſame time the want or weakneſs of the others.

2. When from conſidering the advantages of memory in general, we come to view it more particularly as it regards Compoſition, the importance and indeed neceſſity of acquiring by the method already ſuggeſted as large a proportion of it

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as poſſible will appear, whether we recollect the advantage an author receives from being able readily to remember the ſentiments of others when his thoughts are employed on ſubjects ſimilar to theirs; or when we conſider the benefit incomparably greater ariſing to a man of reflection and diſcernment, from being able to recall upon every ſuitable occaſion thoſe ſentiments to his memory which his own experience of mankind may have formerly ſuggeſted.

With regard to the former of theſe objects, let a man's natural powers in general, and that of invention in particular be ever ſo eminent, yet the knowledge of what hath been advanced on any ſubject whatever by men of acknowledged abilities muſt be highly beneficial, whether he collects from theſe, obſervations by which the errors of his predeceſſors may be corrected, obtains patterns of imitation for himſelf, or, finally, from hints careleſsly thrown out without any accurate inveſtigation of conſequences is able to extend the empire of Science, and lays the foundation of ſome new and ingenious hypo-

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theſis. In theſe caſes a Memory tenacious of ſuch objects as had formerly arreſted his attention, and ready to ſuggeſt an oppoſite and correſponding train of ideas tending to confirm ſome propoſition of which he might have been dubious, from the writings of others; removes at once that diffidence with which the modeſt and ingenuous are apt to propoſe their own ſentiments when theſe have the appearance of ſingularity, and enables an author to purſue his reſearch with confidence and ſatisfaction.

A little reflection will ſhow us likewiſe that this power has effects in every branch of Compoſition that requires it to be cultivated with the greateſt aſſiduity. It was obſerved formerly when we were explaining the nature of invention, that "this "term in its moſt abſtracted ſenſe can with "regard to the human mind have no "ſignificance or propriety whatever *." Every effort of this kind, in the art of which we treat, is in fact an improvement (or an attempt to improve) on ſome prin-

* Sect. iii. p. 101.

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ciples that have formerly been laid down, ſome ſyſtem embraced by our predeceſſors, ſome truths half opened, but not accurately followed out through a train of conſequences by thoſe who from the imperfections of human nature, rather than from any defect of their own faculties (conſidered as human) were able juſt to diſcloſe a path to their ſucceſſors, without examining, or indeed diſcerning themſelves the various ſcenery to which it would naturally open. The firſt ſtep once made, every ſucceeding improvement is effectuated with comparative facility. The perſons who make theſe are unqueſtionably in many inſtances objects of eſteem, and even of admiration to mankind; but to what power of the mind is it owing that a man is able to recall at any time to his thoughts the principles, whether ſimple or complicated, from which his inventions derived their origin; and by whoſe influence is he enabled to follow out the compariſon betwixt cauſes and their effects?—Undoubtedly he is in all this principally aſſiſted by the faculty of recollection, by which objects are

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preſented to the underſtanding looſe indeed, perhaps, and forming at firſt view no very cloſe or accurate combination; but which are ſtill the real, though rude materials, from whoſe union ariſe the juſteſt and moſt elegant proportions.

Every art and ſcience whatever advanceth to perfection by a ſlow and almoſt imperceptible proceſs. To trace indeed either one or other, through its various transformations to its original draught (if I may ſo expreſs myſelf) in the mind, however it might contribute to gratify curioſity by opening a ſet of new and extraordinary combinations, yet would be an attempt wholly impracticable, as the origin of arts, like that of nations, is involved in impenetrable darkneſs. In theſe however, reflection will convince us that artiſts of all denominations have formed one great body; in all nations whatever, cemented by the moſt intimate union, and maintaining a dependence on each other not ariſing from the local influence of laws, faſhions, or what we call national prejudices, which are at the ſame time limited,

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and perpetually varying; but from a natural conformity of ſentiment and character whoſe effect is inſtantaneous, and its operation univerſal. In this immenſe republic, conſtituted of ſo many members diſjoined by climate, cuſtom, manners, and language, Memory is the bond or cement by which the parts are held in connection with each other, and a proportion is obſerved to take place upon the whole. To an improvement thus univerſal, though at the ſame time ſlowly and gradually carried on, all civilized nations will not only be found to have contributed largely at different periods, but individuals likewiſe derive advantage from the writings, as they frequently do from the characters, of their predeceſſors, with whoſe real utility they are not ſufficiently acquainted. Thus the ſentiments of a Greek or Roman author when transfuſed from their original, of which a writer may have very imperfect ideas, into a language which he thoroughly underſtands, become beneficial to him in the higheſt degree, when his memory ſuggeſts theſe as tending to ſupport ſome particular

ticular train of reflection; or when his view of a ſubject in conſequence of this recollection is rendered comprehenſive *.

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* An author of diſtinguiſhed eminence obſerves with great propriety on this ſubject, that "whatever "is very good ſenſe muſt have been common ſenſe in "all times, and that what we call learning is but the "knowledge of the ſenſe of our predeceſſors. They "therefore, who ſay our thoughts are not our own "becauſe they reſemble the ancients, may as well ſay "our faces are not our own, becauſe they are like our "fathers." Pope. This obſervation is as juſt as it is happily illuſtrated, for there is an obvious difference betwixt copying the ſentiments of the ancients, and adopting ſuch as are ſimilar to theirs. In the firſt caſe, an author by either borrowing indiſcriminately the thoughts of thoſe admired writers, or by a *ſervile* imitation of their *manner*, betrays undoubtedly barrenneſs of invention, and a mind afraid to venture beyond certain limits, like a novice detained by fear within a magical circle. On the contrary, a *ſimilarity* whether of ſentiment or manner in this inſtance does honour to a writer as indicating a correſponding reſemblance of character, and is to be conſidered as a proof that men of good ſenſe, in all ages, have agreed in the general tenor of their ſentiments on the ſame ſubjects, though their manner of illuſtrating theſe, the inferences deduced from general principles, their method of detailing a ſubject, and the expreſſion in which their thoughts are conveyed are extremely different. It will

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Here therefore new avenues of thought are opened, an inadequate detail is corrected, enlarged ideas occur to the mind as its principal powers arrange and improve upon the objects preſented by the laſt mentioned faculty; and an individual receives innumerable benefits from this general circulation of ſentiment, while he is ignorant of the particular ſource from which theſe are derived.

The principal beauties in the art of Compoſition was it poſſible to trace theſe accurately to their originals, would be diſcovered to ariſe (at leaſt in many inſtances) from ſentiments, images, or illuſtrations which we have met with in the courſe either of our reading or converſation; but having impreſſed our minds very ſlightly at the time, are afterwards ſecretly retained in the memory unknown to ourſelves, and

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be obſerved, that we ſpeak here of *indiſcriminate* borrowing, and of *ſervile* imitation. In other caſes (ſuch as thoſe above enumerated) the introduction of either proof or illuſtration from any writers of eminence, whether ancient or modern, is not only neceſſary but commendable.

are either recollected when our thoughts are afterwards employed on ſome ſimilar ſubject as *wholly our own*; or become the cauſes (however imperceptible to us) of our falling into a certain ſeries of thought, of reaſoning with juſtneſs, and of painting with maſtery. It is happily not poſſible in the laſt mentioned inſtance, particularly to charge an author with *plagiariſm* (the uſual recourſe of thoſe who limping themſelves upon the crutches of antiquity, judge it impoſſible for others to walk without theſe) becauſe the phraſeology of his original will not be adopted, and the point of reſemblance muſt lie in ſome very minute circumſtance.—In all theſe inſtances, however, as well as when ſentiments tending to confirm our own opinions are openly ſelected for the purpoſes above-mentioned, the advantages of an improved memory need not be pointed out.

3. We proceed therefore to obſerve, that as this faculty is of great importance by enabling an author to acquire real benefit from the ſentiments of others, ſo it will appear to be of ſtill greater conſequence,

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when we conſider it as retaining thoſe which his own experience of mankind may have ſuggeſted to him in the commerce of life. That knowledge of mankind which can only be acquired by long and deliberate attention, is evidently ſubſervient to no material purpoſe of any kind, unleſs when memory is improved in ſuch a manner as to preſent (when theſe can be turned to advantage) ſuch reflections as may have ariſen from various occurrences. Diſcernment, with materials of this kind laid before it, acts immediately in its proper ſphere, when it ſelects from theſe ſuch as tend moſt immediately either to eſtabliſh a theory, or to regulate practice. It is true, indeed, that many events, comparatively inſignificant, will be wholly obliterated from the mind; that many reflections, of no conſequence to promote its ultimate purpoſe, will paſs ſuperficially over it without ever being recalled; that, in ſhort, many occurrences deemed by ſome perſons of the moſt indiſpenſible conſequence, will be cancelled from the memory when it is ſtored with ſuch ideas as may

be turned in this manner to real utility: and this perhaps ſuggeſts the true reaſon why men of underſtanding, or of penetration, are ſo often judged to be deficient in remembrance. Common ideas, like inferior expreſſions in a maſterly drawing, are ſtruck out at once from the field; but their place is ſupplied by ſuch ſtrong, ſignificant, and animated characters as no time can efface, and whoſe arrangement promotes the purpoſe of entertainment or inſtruction, as they may be directed by the governing power.

It will be ſaid, and we acknowledge with truth, that Memory appears in all this proceſs of the ſame value only as a ſtore-room, which, though capable, when it is of proper dimenſions, to contain a large proportion of materials, yet is neither ſenſible of the value of theſe, nor capable to regulate their diſpoſition with accuracy. The utility however of this intellectual repoſitory muſt be ſeen in the ſame light by the philoſopher as that of the former (to carry on the metaphor) is by the man of buſineſs, as neither of theſe can proſecute

ſecute his trade without the poſſeſſion of ſo neceſſary an implement, and both require this reſervoir to be enlarged as their various ſpheres of intercourſe or experience become more extenſive and open. It is in all caſes whatever only principally requiſite that in the acquiſition of knowledge of whatever kind, a due attention be paid to the underſtanding by whoſe ſuperior operation ſymmetry of parts is to take place on the whole. We may, no doubt, overload the memory with a multitude of incoherent ideas, which the judgment of a writer is unable to place in any exact diſpoſition, as well as give the latter too little exerciſe where it might make a ſtrenuous exertion, by too ſcanty and diſproportioned a ſhare of materials. The end of inſtruction is undoubtedly marred in either of thoſe caſes, though much more effectually in the firſt caſe than in the laſt. Obſcurity at leaſt, if not utter confuſion and abſurdity, muſt take place when the mind, like the body couching beneath an heavy burthen, is overpowered by conceptions half-formed, and juſtling out each other;

as imagination can at ſuch a time be impreſſed but ſlightly by any ideas, and judgment muſt be unable to ſelect from ſo many diſcordant objects, ſuch as are beſt adapted to particular purpoſes. This effect is ſometimes occaſioned by making too much uſe of the various methods by which men have attempted to extend the power of Memory, or to ſupply its defects *. We

* The illuſtrious author whom we quoted above, mentions two methods by which an artificial memory may be acquired. The firſt rule he preſcribes is that the mind ſhould be habituated to contemplate objects as ſtanding in a certain order with others whoſe affinity is moſt obvious, rather than to view either of theſe without this relation. This is what he calls *prænotio*; and he obſerves, that by ſuch a perception, the man is kept from wandering in the regions of infinity; and if memory does not immediately preſent the deſired idea, yet it falls into the proper train of diſcovering it. The other he ſuggeſts, is that the mind ſhould repreſent intellectual objects rather *emblematically* than as theſe really are, by which means becoming at once, in ſome meaſure at leaſt, the objects of ſenſe, they ſtrike the memory more forcibly than otherwiſe, and are recollected with facility. This laſt method it probably was by which the Corſican, mentioned by Muretus, repeated with eaſe ſome thouſands of words in different languages, which had no connection with each

We are often however groſsly deceived when we pronounce, as we are ready to do from inſtances of this nature, that the principal powers of the mind are really weak in proportion as Memory is comprehenſive. In fact, the only inference ariſing from this train of obſervation is, that no degree whatever of intellectual qualities can exempt a man from falling into errors and inconſiſtencies, when the diſproportion betwixt theſe is remarkably obvious. In this caſe the balance of the mind is deſtroyed; and though neither a compre-

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each other, immediately after he had heard theſe pronounced; each having probably recalled to his memory ſome ſenſible object by which he had been accuſtomed to repreſent it. We have many other examples, both ancient and modern, of men ſome of them (as the celebrated Cinzas) of diſtinguiſhed genius, who have carried this art to the higheſt perfection. After all, however, the former of theſe rules is undoubtedly by far the moſt eligible, as affording exerciſe to the underſtanding, whoſe ideas (as long as the relation betwixt objects is kept in view) will be conſtantly diſtinct and explicit: by the latter (when abuſed as in the preceding inſtance) a man will acquire memory to the ſame purpoſe as a parrot is taught language, and will be only more valuable in proportion not to the choice of his ſubjects, but the number of his words.

henſive memory, nor a luxuriant imagination, can (as we have already ſeen) be ſaid to argue a defective underſtanding, yet we can have no ſurer teſt of a judgment adequate to every purpoſe in the province of Compoſition, than when this laſt appears to have the images of the former and the treaſures of the latter (conſidered as the parent of experience) ſubſervient in ſuch a manner to ſome general purpoſe as that each may alternately concur to elucidate and confirm its principles.

SECTION VI.

Of the various Combinations of the intellectual Powers in the different ſpecies of Compoſition.

A Curious reader will naturally be led to enquire from the concluſion of the preceding ſection, what is underſtood by *the balance of intellectual powers*, whether this can be gained, and what are the methods moſt expedient to acquire it.

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Theſe points, as of the moſt eſſential importance, we ſhall endeavour to obviate in a ſubſequent ſection:—in the mean time it is neceſſary, before we proceed to theſe queſtions, that after having conſidered each faculty of the mind as occupying a ſeparate province in the art of Compoſition, we ſhould take a view of all theſe as exerting united influence not merely on the art in general, but on the parts of which it is conſtituted, requiring a combination varied in proportion to their different natures, tendency, and deſign.

1. To examine particularly every ſpecies of Compoſition, with regard to that union of intellectual powers from which its origin is derived, is not neceſſary upon the preſent occaſion, becauſe ſome of theſe (however different when viewed as diſtinct branches of the art) yet have their original in common from the ſame concurrence of faculties, varied only from each other not in their manner of exertion, but wholly in the degrees in which theſe ſubſiſt. Thus under the general denomination of poetry, conſidered in the preſent point of view,

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we may include at the ſame time the various ſpecies of it as indicating univerſally the union of judgment and imagination, though by no means always in the ſame proportion; and the ſiſter art of eloquence from which in point of original it hath no peculiar mark of diſtinction. Philoſophy on the other hand, as a ſcience comprehending diverſified ſubjects, ſometimes demanding an high exertion of the inventive power, and at others indicating only the exiſtence of reaſon, whoſe proof is carried on without the aid of the latter, will require to be more particularly conſidered. Hiſtory, fable, and criticiſm, (the latter more immediately as connected with taſte) will fall under a ſeparate examination, with which we ſhall ſum up the enquiry.

It will occur very readily to a conſiderate mind that to diſtinguiſh with preciſion betwixt ſimilar objects, to detect fallacy in an argument or opinion, when this is artfully concealed by a plauſible repreſentation, to eſtabliſh criteria by which judgment may be regulated, and, finally, to exhibit in exact and perſpicuous

diſpoſition

diſpoſition ſuch abſtracted ideas as it requires the niceſt perception to develope with accuracy:—that a procedure of this kind, when properly conducted, indicates no common ſhare of that diſcernment whoſe nature and operation we have attempted to point out as far as relates to the preſent ſubject. From what hath been already advanced on the laſt mentioned topic, we may conclude that penetration as requiſite for theſe purpoſes, muſt be conſtituted indeed of underſtanding, but may be exerted without any proportioned ſhare of the other qualities by which in general we have ſeen it to be diſtinguiſhed. The truth of this remark will be obvious, if we conſider more particularly that proceſs of ideas in the mind by whoſe union the ends which it is propoſed to obtain in this branch of philoſophy, may be moſt eaſily and completely effectuated.

When in conſequence of cloſe and comprehenſive inveſtigation, a theory is gradually formed, and the mind proceeds deliberately to accompliſh a purpoſe remote perhaps, and difficult to be reached as it may

may appear at firſt view; a train of intermediate ideas are gradually preſented as its enquiry is carried on, by which its approach to this end is facilitated, and the object of reſearch is more diſtinctly perceived, and is examined with greater accuracy as the diſtance leſſens at which it was originally beheld. By this manner a mind intent upon the diſcovery of truth, and fixing its whole attention upon one purpoſe, can ſurvey in diſtinct points of view the means as diſtinguiſhed from each other, by which its aim is to be obtained, and thus can detect ſuch fallacies by minute inſpection as are neceſſarily overlooked in a general eſtimate however accurate and judicious. Imagination, from what hath been already obſerved on its manner of operation, muſt of all other powers be moſt unfit for a proceſs of this nature; and the diſcerning *faculty* as formed by the union of both judgment and fancy, we have ſeen in general to be characteriſed by perceiving a few ſtrong and deciſive criteria, or by ſelecting a few eſſential circumſtances to form its eſtimate;

mate; but not by advancing regularly from one object to another, and by conſidering ſeparately each particular part, however neceſſary to conſtitute a whole. Diſcernment therefore, will enable the philoſopher to obſerve the end of his ſearch as practicable, while it is yet at a diſtance, and may form this judgment from a train of thought which a common obſerver might deem extremely remote, and even incongruous to its purpoſe; but in the ſelection of ſubordinate parts, as well as the diſpoſition of theſe in ſuch progreſſion as leads the mind imperceptibly to the point in view by a conſiſtent and accurate procedure, in theſe points judgment is required to exert its influence peculiarly; as in all the others it ought eminently to predominate *.

* It was probably from conſidering judgment in this comprehenſive light that Chryſippus is ſaid to have defined it as that power by which the mind, anticipating in ſome meaſure the dictates of experience, acquires univerſal knowledge of the objects that ſurround it. Ο δε Χρυσιππος κριτηρια φησιν ειναι αισθησιν και προληψιν· εστι δε η προληψις Εννοια Φυσικη των καθολυ. Διογ. Λαερτ. Ζηνω. βιβ. ζ.

Should

Should we therefore be aſked to diſplay that combination of intellectual powers which gives riſe to the more abſtracted branches of philoſophical diſquiſition, and to point out the character which ought to be appropriated to each, it may be replied, that in a mind adapted to the accompliſhment of ſuch purpoſes, imagination ought to be diſtinguiſhed beyond all other qualities by *acuteneſs of perception*, and reaſon by its clearneſs and preciſion *. Thus the moſt acute perception is obviouſly required to aſcertain the preciſe point in which two objects, to appearance perfectly ſimilar, are diſtinguiſhed from each other; and clearneſs of judgment when this diſtinction is once perceived, to expreſs it with adequate perſpicuity.—Let us try an example by which theſe remarks may be illuſtrated.—An image and a metaphor will, at firſt view, be ſuppoſed to convey

* Ωσε ϗδεν ϖροσδειται ϖραγματων αγωνας κεκτημενων, το υφεϛηκος δε τελος επιλογιζεσθαι και ϖασαν την ενεργειαν εφ' ην τα δοξαζομενα αναγομεν. Ει δε' μη, ϖαντα ακρισιας και ταραχης ϵσαι μεϛα, &c. Id. Επικ. βιϐ. ι.

the

the ſame idea to the mind, as both of theſe are included under the general name of illuſtration. A philoſopher however, of diſtinguiſhed eminence, not only diſtinguiſheth the one of theſe from the other, as we have already ſeen *, but clearly ſhows us of what the difference conſiſts. "An image (ſays he) differs in ſome re- "ſpects from a metaphor. When it is "ſaid of Achilles *he ruſhed like a lion*, "here is a ſtrong image employed; but "when dropping the name of the hero it "is only ſaid ſimply *the lion ruſhed*, this "is a metaphor." Thus an image is perfect when the ſimilarity betwixt two objects is diſplayed by having theſe ſeparately exhibited to view; whereas a metaphor ſuppoſeth this reſemblance to be univerſally conſpicuous, and mentions only the ſecondary object of compariſon as including the firſt.

With the ſame perſpicacity does this great genius point out the difference be-

* Sect. ii.

twixt

twixt the ends of eloquence and philoſophy.—" Why (ſays he) do we judge the " ſphere of an orator to be different from " that of a philoſopher? Is it not becauſe " the latter contemplates *the cauſe*, while " the former is attentive to *the effect*? " The one tells us of what injuſtice, for " inſtance, conſiſts; the other, to what " perſons this character belongs. The " one explains the nature of tyranny, the " other illuſtrates his ſubject by having " recourſe to the tyrant *." In theſe examples the union of thoſe qualities which conſtitute philoſophical diſcernment will be perceived, and the underſtanding in particular as rendering the moſt minute diſtinctions perfectly intelligible by a happy application of examples, and perſpicuity of expreſſion. Without therefore adopting the opinion of thoſe who conſider all abſtracted philoſophy as deprived of

* Διατι τον φιλοσοφον τυ ῥητορος οιονται διαφερειν, η ὁτι ο μεν τι εϛι αδικια, ο δε ως αδικος ο δεινα· και ο μεν ὁτι Τυρραννος, ο δε οιον Τυραννις. Αριϛοτ. Προβληματ. τμημ. ιη.

ſolidity,

ſolidity *, and refinement as inconſiſtent with juſtneſs of reaſoning; we may ſurely affirm that an underſtanding, however comprehenſive, that is not able to ſeparate clearly the inferior parts of its theory from each other, is unfit for this branch of philoſophical diſquiſition: and that imagination, in order to be accommodated properly to ſuch ſubtle inveſtigation, muſt be directed to ſelect ſuch illuſtrations as (without regard to ſublimity, beauty, harmony or elegance as peculiarly requiſite) are ſuited with the utmoſt propriety to particular objects. Judgment, it is certain, may poſſeſs comprehenſion without being able to obſerve the more minute proportions of certain parts; and imagination, extent or ſublimity without the power of tracing its objects through every little relation, in the ſame manner as the mind that plans a

* La philoſophie ne devint abſtraite que quand elle ceſſa d'eſtre ſolide; on s'allacha des formalitez quand'on n'eut plus rien de real a dire, & l'on ne s'aviſa de recourir a la ſubtilité que quand'on n'eſpera plus faire valoir la raiſon par ſa ſimplicité. Rap. Reflex. ſur la Philoſ. tom. ii. p. 358.

magnificent ſtructure may overlook the ſymmetry of a ſlight decoration; or an eye that contemplates with wonder the extent of the firmament, may be unfit even with the aid of a microſcope to mark the various lines in the organization of inſects.

II. From contemplating the evaneſcent objects (as they will be deemed by many perſons) of metaphyſical ſpeculation, let us proceed to conſider with the ſame view to the faculties of the mind, a branch of this ſcience more eaſily comprehended as well as univerſally intereſting; I mean what may be denominated the philoſophy of the heart. This noble ſpecies of the ſcience in queſtion gives ſcope alternately to every intellectual faculty, and engageth the mind in purſuits which are connected with the moſt important intereſts of the whole ſpecies.—Before we proceed to conſider that combination of theſe powers which gives riſe to this philoſophy, let us examine a little more particularly of what it may be ſaid to conſiſt.

As an inlet to any thorough acquaintance with the human heart it is princi-

pally

pally neceſſary that we ſhould have ſtudied the paſſions with regard to their nature, tendency, and effects. Theſe aſſume in the various ſcenes of human life ſo many different, and upon ſome occaſions ſeemingly incongruous appearances, that tho' their influence extends univerſally to every branch of conduct or ſpeculation without exception, yet there is no enquiry in which the mind is more apt to be bewildered, and to fall into error than that which this various reſearch naturally preſents to it. The difficulty here ariſeth from the complicated nature and affinity of the paſſions to each other, connected as theſe are ſo cloſely as that cauſes wholly diſtinct and remote in reality are yet apt to be confounded together when we judge from their effects. This will be obvious to any perſon who reflects that ambition and avarice, pride and vanity, malignity and envy, love and pity, with many other combinations of a ſimilar kind, produce conſequences ſo perfectly correſponding to one another, that in characters principally influenced by any of theſe, a ſeries of

actions is uſually neceſſary to diſtinguiſh the principle that is really predominant, from another to which it bears a reſemblance. It happens indeed often that the character is formed, and a *ruling paſſion* is obſerved to be univerſally conſpicuous in conſequence not of any propenſity implanted by nature on the mind with particular ſtrength, but merely from certain habits of indulgence. By theſe a paſſion weak perhaps originally, or but moderately powerful, hath been called out into exertion more frequently than others, and hath thus imperceptibly acquired that predominance which it gains at laſt ſo completely, and diſplays with ſuch energy. The inferior and ſubordinate emotions of the heart as variouſly excited by an irreſiſtible impulſe, as it may be deemed, are diſtinguiſhed by different denominations, as theſe appear to be more or leſs ſubjected to the controul of underſtanding *.

From

* This is illuſtrated in the following paſſage from a philoſopher a few fragments only of whoſe writings have

From the union of theſe, in which, without eradicating wholly ſuch as are painful, it is principally requiſite that a proper temperature ſhould take place on the whole *; from this union ariſeth all that variety

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have reached the preſent times. Και καθο μεν αρχεται και αγεται ο θυμος. και α επιθυμια υπο τυ λογου εχοντος μερεος τας ψυκας, α εγκρατεια και α καρτερια αγεται τυγχανοντι. Καθο δε μετα βιας αλλ' ουκ εκουσιως τυτο ωρασσοντι κακιαι τυγχανονται. Δει γαρ την αρετην μη μετα λυπας, αλλα μετα ηδονας τα δεοντα ωρασσειν· Πυθαγορ. Αποσπασ. p. 34.

* Επειδη η τυ ηθεος αρετη ωερι ωαθεα, των δε ωαθεων ηδονα και λυπα υπερτατα, φανερον οτι ουκ εν τω υπεξελεσθαι τα ωαθεα της ψυκης αδοναν και λυπαν η αρετη ωεπτωκεν, αλλα εν τω ταυτα συναρμοζεσθαι. id. ibid. This ſentment the author proceeds to confirm by ſome very ſtriking and appoſite illuſtrations. Thus he obſerved that in order to produce health which ariſeth from the temperature of corporeal powers, heat and cold, drought and humidity, however pernicious in the extreme, are not to be removed, but to be blended ſo properly, as that from the concurrence of all may ariſe an effect of the moſt ineſtimable importance. In the moſt inchanting of all arts likewiſe that of the muſician, thoſe ſharp or deep ſounds which a man unacquainted with the art might judge to be harſh and diſcordant, yet when juſtly modulated in ſome happily conducted air contribute to render the harmony perfect, and to heighten inexpreſſibly the ef-

variety of ſtrong, ſignificant, and delicate ſignatures by which men are in many inſtances ſo ſtrikingly diſcriminated. A detail therefore of theſe, as exerting ſeparate or united influence on the conduct of mankind, is in fact an hiſtory of the human heart; and in order to develope the movements of this complicated machine, the ſuperior powers of the mind, united with exquiſite ſenſibility and comprehenſive experience muſt be kept in ſtrenuous and conſtant exerciſe. In order to accompliſh this purpoſe thoroughly, characters muſt not only be ſet in oppoſition to each other, that ſhades otherwiſe imperceptible may be accurately delineated; but the paſſions muſt be taken ſeparately; their manner of operating in different aſſemblages expoſed; the influence of habit, prepoſſeſſion, an accidental combination of

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fect of the whole piece. In the ſame manner our author obſerves that the paſſions, though theſe jar indeed and are diſcordant when viewed merely by themſelves, yet when ſubjected to the controul of reaſon, afford the moſt powerful incitements to virtue, and are thus on the whole of the moſt indiſpenſable utility and importance.

objects,

objects, and ſuch other cauſes as contribute to form the variety of minds particularly inveſtigated; and an intellectual mirror held up to us, in this manner, in which each individual may have an opportunity to examine his own portrait, to judge of its likeneſs, and to correct ſuch expreſſions as he judgeth to be improper, or ſupply thoſe in which he perceives a defect.

1. An eloquent writer of the preſent age obſerves very juſtly, that, "the underſtanding and the paſſions are indebted "to each other, much more than moraliſts "are commonly willing to allow; ſince "as the former diſcovers our wants, and "their gratifications in conſequence of an "impulſe from the latter, ſo theſe on the "other hand take in a greater compaſs "and variety of objects from that knowledge which is acquired by the other *." Judgment however in the whole proceſs

* Rouſſeau. See his Diſſert. ſur l'inequalité des hommes.

abovementioned cannot be ſaid ſo properly to diſcover original ſubjects of ſpeculation, as to compare theſe together with accuracy when they are preſented to it, and to obſerve the preciſe points of oppoſition or reſemblance. Thus, when in order to form ſome new aſſemblage of qualities, the mind recollects the various diſpoſition of theſe which it obſerves to have taken place promiſcuouſly among men, the power by whoſe operation theſe are exhibited in ſtriking and original combinations is no doubt that of invention: but when the firſt heat hath ſubſided, the expedience or incongruity of this aſſemblage; the ſtrength of particular expreſſions, and the comparative merit of all, as exhibiting a juſt or defective imitation of nature; of thoſe points the underſtanding ſeparately takes cogniſance, and its perſpicacity is properly aſcertained from the proportion of thoſe figures which have paſſed before it in review.

It is indeed impoſſible to behold that faculty by which man is diſtinguiſhed from

from inferior animals employed in a ſphere more worthy of its efforts, or more juſtly adapted to diſplay its energy and comprehenſion than what is here laid before us. The paſſions of human nature, of whatever denomination, conſidered as ſuſceptible of the moſt lively impreſſions from external objects, are brought before this ſuperior faculty by imagination, which may be conſidered as their parent, to be followed through all their windings, and the effects ariſing from each, however complicated, to be traced up to its proper cauſe.

From ſuch a variety of paſſions, called up for the purpoſes abovementioned, reaſon, when it is required to form juſt and natural characters from the union of all, proceeds in courſes extremely different, as its deciſions are impreſſed by the power that made ſo many objects fall under its cogniſance. In this caſe a defective underſtanding appears principally conſpicuous from the qualities of the mind, as exceeding (if I may ſo expreſs myſelf) their natural dimenſions, or forming a very

very improper combination in particular circumſtances for the accompliſhment of any rational purpoſe. Of the firſt kind are all thoſe paſſions which are ſuppoſed to precipitate a man to extremes * upon almoſt

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* Examples of this kind, readers of a certain claſs will find in great abundance among the writers of the old romance; among whom nothing is more common than for a hero to run himſelf through the body upon receiving any piece of diſagreeable intelligence, particularly when he is jealous of the fidelity of his miſtreſs; and to be in as little danger of death from a thruſt of this nature as from the ſcratch of a pin. We muſt however take care not to rank with theſe, in the preſent point of view, ſuch writers as Spencer and Arioſto, whoſe themes are profeſſedly allegorical, and to whom therefore a different ſtandard of criticiſm muſt be adapted. The conduct of every author whatever with regard to the perſons of his fable, ought to be eſtimated from the nature of thoſe beings who are his principal actors; and of this laſt claſs again we are required to judge, as having a certain, probable, or merely ideal exiſtence. In either of the latter caſes (as when giants, magicians, or dragons and hydras are introduced) we impute no defect of judgment to the writer, when we find his actors diveſted of human paſſions (at leaſt of the ſofter and more amiable kind) and actions correſponding to the ideas excited by this deſcription, we view as conſequences

almoſt every occaſion, from whoſe effects it becomes immediately neceſſary to invent uncommon

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ſequences ariſing neceſſarily from their introduction. It will indeed be ſaid that the laſt mentioned authors fall into the ſame error with the former, when they repreſent men as not only encountering, but obtaining the victory over creatures ſo greatly their ſuperiors. But a poet whoſe ultimate aim is to enforce the motives to virtuous conduct by allegorical repreſentation, is undoubtedly free to make uſe of expedients without cenſure, which in an account of tranſactions among merely human agents are certain evidences of defective underſtanding. Thus therefore the invulnerable Orlando attacking fearleſly whatever beings oppoſed his intentions, and the red-croſs knight reſtored to inſtant vigour by falling into the *well of life* after having been wounded and overthrown by a dragon, the fell inchanter who purſued without remorſe or pity the virtuous lady or the hardy knight; and the knight ſtimulated by the paſſion of love, who devotes ſoul and body to the ſervice of his miſtreſs; all theſe it will be readily granted are examples in which nature is overſtrained as it were, and her juſt proportions are diſregarded. But without having recourſe to the manners of primitive ages, in which the paſſion of love particularly gave occaſion to actions of the moſt romantic extravagance, it is ſufficient to obſerve that when *the moral* inculcated by allegorical compoſition (in the illuſtration of which the underſtanding of the writer is principally occupied) appears not to be violated, we permit him to uſe ſuch reſources with freedom as are moſt expedient to his purpoſe; and fix our attention,

uncommon and often unnatural methods of deliverance. One error it will be obſerved in this, as in many caſes, is the parent of another, and the invention of ſome ſtrange and incredible interpoſition in order to reſcue ſome perſonage from imminent peril, or perhaps almoſt inſtantaneouſly to raiſe him from death, is in fact a conſequence of the ſame inadequate judgment by which he was permitted to be expoſed to that peril, or to be raſhly placed in ſuch deſperate circumſtances *.

Reaſon

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tion, not upon the probable nature of the incidents but upon the doctrine which ſo many agreeable fictions are adapted to recommend.

* The remarks made on this ſubject in the preceding note, p. 191. will prevent us in a great meaſure from extending the charge brought here againſt the conduct of authors in a certain ſpecies of fable to the events that occur in the great ſtandards of the Epopœa. In the Iliad, Hector, ſtruck down by Ajax, is carried from the field in a deep faint, is laid down by his attendants at a diſtance from the war, and after his recovery is wholly unable to reſume the command of his hoſt. This command however he muſt neceſſarily exerciſe without delay, and his former vigour muſt be reſtored in a moment. The poet therefore takes advantage of the received mythology of his country. With that maſterly addreſs for which he is ſo juſtly celebrated,

Reaſon when its influence predominates in the mind adjuſts the intellectual ballance with more preciſion and accuracy; and aſſigning their proper ſpheres to the paſ-

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lebrated, he introduceth the ſupreme deity, whoſe attention for ſome time had been purpoſely called off, as turning his eyes on the chief, whoſe pains immediately paſs away. The god of health deſcends at his command, and that Hector may be enabled to fulfil his deſtiny, or rather that the great moral of the fable Διος δε τελειετο βουλη, the will of God accompliſhed, may be inculcated; he is immediately reſtored to that ſtate in which Jupiter had formerly beheld him. Here therefore there is not only a "dignus vindice nodus," becauſe a ſupernatural reſource is rendered indiſpenſibly neceſſary; but the diſaſter of Hector is brought on by no unnatural ſtraining of character; and the cauſe in which he fights is ſuch as recommends him to the protection of that power which interpoſeth for his deliverance. A brave man ſuffering in the cauſe of his country is no doubt an object in whoſe behalf Homer might ſuppoſe that being to be intereſted, who looks not with an indifferent eye upon virtue in diſtreſs. The poet however it muſt be owned was in one circumſtance peculiarly favoured by the theological tenets of his countrymen, which permitted him to ſuppoſe that the attention of Jupiter might be interrupted; as by aſcribing to him an *human paſſion*, he hath introduced the misfortune and the deliverance of the Trojan prince by a detail, ſo various, ſo rich, and expreſſive of ſuch aſtoniſhing invention as ſucceeding poets muſt admire, with a deſpair of being able ſucceſsfully to imitate.

ſions,

ſions, however impetuous, permits not the character to be marked by extravagant and unnatural expreſſions of their power.

This faculty of the mind it is likewiſe that regulates the general combination of the paſſions in order to accompliſh particular purpoſes. Thus from a heart in which generoſity is joined with ambition, humanity with fortitude, and more maſculine paſſions are tempered happily by clemency and benevolence; from ſuch an heart we expect the forgiveneſs of perſonal injuries, the voluntary ſacrifice upon urgent occaſions of private gratification; pity exerciſed towards a vanquiſhed enemy, and univerſal benignity extending to all. Here therefore there is that mutual conformity betwixt the character itſelf, and the action ariſing from this temperament of qualities which indicates the prevalence of ſound underſtanding. On the other hand a man whoſe judgment is inadequate to the taſk of forming from theſe materials any juſt and accurate combination, inſtead of adapting circumſtances to the diſplay of paſſions

united

united originally for particular purpoſes, will at every other time be compelled to throw ſome new ingredient into the portrait of his perſons as he is directed by events. It is eaſy to forſee that inconſiſtency and confuſion muſt be the conſequence of proceeding in this manner, and a motly combination of intellectual and moral qualities aſſembled together, for which nature amidſt all her wild and variegated productions never yet afforded a model of imitation.

Thus far we have endeavourcd to mark out preciſely the ſphere that is occupied by the underſtanding, conſidered as unconnected with the other powers (as far as it can be contemplated in this light), with regard to its influence on the qualities of the heart. The obſervations on this ſubject have referred principally to the makers or inventors of character, becauſe it is in the writings of theſe that the branch of philoſophy we are here examining is moſt eminently diſplayed, and from theſe therefore may be ſelected the moſt ſtriking examples. The ſame power however which

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in one mind regulates and adjuſts the paſſions to each other, ſo as to form upon the whole a natural aſſemblage, in another takes cognizance of this regulation as juſt or defective according to its reſemblance or diſſimilarity to the ſtandard of nature. He therefore who forms the original draught as it may be called from ſuch diverſified materials, and he who judgeth with truth and accuracy of its propriety, differ from each other only perhaps in the degree of intellectual merit, and in the objects to which the ſame qualities receive a direction: in other reſpects, the poet who by the various aſſemblage of the paſſions and affections gives ſtrength, ſignificance, and peculiarity to his characters; the critic who decides of theſe with propriety from the unerring ſtandard abovementioned; and the philoſopher who, without regard to either, conſiders their different ends, expreſſions, and tendency, as forming objects of the greateſt importance and utility in his diſplay of the mind; theſe diſcover in their various ſpheres that union of intellectual powers which qualifies

fies for this branch of inveſtigation, and in particular an underſtanding fitted to form juſt and deciſive obſervations.

2. Judgment alone however, though operating as we have ſeen in a very extenſive range even in the preſent branch of diſquiſition, yet is employed principally in the taſk of throwing into juſt diſpoſition ſuch objects as are placed before it for this purpoſe. The qualification therefore indiſpenſably neceſſary to effectuate the full purpoſe of developing the heart is that diſcernment conſtituted by the ſuperior powers in their moſt vigorous exertion, which we have formerly endeavoured to explain and illuſtrate.

If it be true (as we are taught by experience) that imagination is the parent of the paſſions, whoſe ſtrength is commonly proportioned to its exuberance and vigour, we may then conclude, that a large proportion of it joined to the former (whoſe office we have attempted to explain) muſt be conferred, when theſe ſprings of human action are purſued through their diverſified effects. A man of diſcernment

obtains this purpoſe without any tedious proceſs of reflection in moſt circumſtances, becauſe he judgeth immediately, either from experience or compariſon. By the former he is enabled to recollect the influence of theſe on his own mind as acting either ſeparately or in union with each other; while by the latter he can decide in ſuch caſes as fall not within the verge of his immediate cogniſance, of the conſequences ariſing from any combination whatever on the conduct of another judging in the ſame or ſimilar circumſtances of what he finds within himſelf.

The judgment therefore that is formed of human nature by a perſon of this character is uſually at the ſame time juſt and comprehenſive. Juſt, becauſe derived from no ſecondary cauſe it is the immediate reſult of feeling and experience; and comprehenſive, becauſe the ſubject complex, as it is, is only ſuited to the mind that ſurveys it, which far from depending upon conjectural evidence, is able to form an enlarged eſtimate from thoſe qualities which nature has conferred as the means

of

of its enquiry. In all this proceſs we may obſerve, that purpoſes are obtained by what we may call with the ſtricteſt propriety philoſophical diſcernment, which diſpaſſionate reaſon with all its accuracy and attention muſt ever be unable in any meaſure to accompliſh. For, as a man of weak fancy will be diſqualified to trace this power through its higheſt ſphere of excellence, or a man of mere judgment to follow out reaſon through the labyrinth of intricate and metaphyſical deduction; ſo it is equally impracticable that he whoſe paſſions are cold, and his ſenſibility proportionably deficient, ſhould be able, however high in underſtanding, to trace from their effects thoſe cauſes as powerfully influencing the minds of others, which operate ſo weakly on his own. We can indeed eaſily conceive a man of this caſt as qualified to lay down excellent rules for the government of the paſſions, to point out the danger ariſing from their indulgence, and after having deſcanted on thoſe topics with great juſtice and propriety, to render each the ſubject of ſome general declama-

tion. Thus a man whoſe mind was never ſtimulated by ambition, may diſplay many of the evils of which we know it to be productive; as he in the ſame manner who has no great propenſity to practiſe candour, benevolence, or friendſhip himſelf, may yet enumerate many advantages derived from theſe with unexceptionable accuracy. But in ſuch frigid detail (of which, was it neceſſary, we might adduce many examples from moral writers both ancient and modern) that "vivida vis animi," that piercing energy of thought, by whoſe means the influence of one paſſion upon another is expoſed in ſuch a manner as to ſtrike out ſome peculiar expreſſion which the mind inſtantly appropriates; this is wholly wanting, and the defect is by no means compenſated by exact diſpoſition, perſpicuous language, and even by what may be deemed a more valuable acquiſition than either of the former, an extenſive intercourſe and knowledge of mankind.

In general we may lay it down as a maxim, which will be found to hold good with very few exceptions, that where the mind,

mind, inſtead of ſearching its ſubject to the bottom, runs into looſe declamation; and when it ought to inveſtigate a *cauſe*, expatiates only pompouſly upon the effect; in theſe caſes a defect of intellectual powers is commonly indicated, or at leaſt an underſtanding diſqualified to exhibit an adequate repreſentation of the object which it propoſes to contemplate. A man of real diſcernment not only ſhifts upon all ſides, as it were, every ſucceſſive proſpect that paſſeth before him, but for the time is really actuated by the paſſion he deſcribes, or influenced in ſome meaſure by the motives he enumerates. By an exertion of the ſuperior faculties acting in concurrence, he is able alternately to examine the ſelfiſh, as well as more benevolent affections in their various modes of operation; and thus, by the temporary but powerful influence of theſe on his own temper, throws out particular and ſignificant criteria, whoſe truth is not only acknowledged by the judgment, but felt by the heart.

An admired ancient, who himſelf poſſeſſed an eminent ſhare of this diſcernment, treats another author with juſt ridicule who had choſen a ſubject to which he was no way equal. The rhetorician Iſocrates introduces a diſcourſe which he compoſed to convince the Greeks, that they were more indebted to the people of Athens than to thoſe of Lacedæmon, by ſaying, "That eloquence is peculiarly "excellent, becauſe it can depreſs great "actions, and magnify ſuch as are incon-"ſiderable; becauſe it can render old "things new, and new old." "Are you "Iſocrates (ſays the critic) going to em-"ploy this eloquence in aſcertaining the "comparative merit of the Athenians and "Lacedæmonians?—Then you give your "reader a warning not to credit a word "you may advance on the ſubject *." What then is eloquence?—Let us hear on this ſubject a perſon deeply ſkilled in the philoſophy of the heart.—"An orator he

* Λογγιν. περι ὑψ. τμημ. λη.

"tells

" tells us has the following great ends to " accompliſh. He muſt conciliate the " minds of his audience by a judicious " exordium, relate facts in a ſimple man- " ner, confirm theſe by proof, refute ob- " jections, and after thus influencing the " judgment of his audience, addreſs him- " ſelf finally to their paſſions *."—In this laſt ſphere of his exertion every part of nature is to be animated in his diſcourſe †.— " He is to call up the dead, to make his " country itſelf utter an addreſs to its in- " habitants, as to her degenerate ſons; " every thing muſt live in his deſcrip-

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* " In omni porro cauſa judiciali quinque eſſe partes: quarum exordio conciliari audientem, narratione cauſam proponi, confirmatione roborari, refutatione diſſolvi, animos moveri, &c." Quintil. Inſtitut. lib. vii.

† " Hic orator et defunctos excitabit, ut Appium cæcum: apud hunc & patria ipſa exclamabit, aliquemque alloquetur:—hic Deos ipſos in congreſſum prope ſuum ſermonemque deducet, " Vos inquam Albani tumuli, atque luci, vos Albanorum obrutæ aræ ſacrorum populi Romani ſociæ & æquales! Hic iram, hic miſericordiam inſpirabit; hic dicet, te vidit, & flevit, & appellavit, & per omnes affectus trahatur *." Quintil. lib. xii. c. 10.

* Cicer. pro Milon.

" tion: at one time he is to ſingle out,
" and addreſs the criminal; at another to
" invoke the groves and altars which he
" had pollutted. The Gods themſelves
" are to be introduced into the aſſembly,
" and rendered ſpeakers in his diſcourſe.
" Thus (ſays this conſummate judge of
" mankind) thus will anger, pity, and
" every paſſion of what kind ſoever be
" alternately excited, and the heart be
" rendered ſuſceptible of whatever impreſ-
" ſions it may be deemed neceſſary to ex-
" cite."

This difference, or rather this oppoſition betwixt the Greek and Roman author in treating the ſame ſubject, ſerves to illuſtrate in ſome meaſure the preceding remarks. In the former (whoſe judgment appears not to have been ſound enough to regulate the ſallies of a puerile fancy) we obſerve a propenſity to general deſcription, and a ſilly affectation of point and antitheſis, which indicate a mind able only to take a ſuperficial and undiſtinguiſhing review. The latter on the contrary becomes *particular* in conſequence of ſuperior diſcernment.

cernment. His mind appears to have comprehended at one view, not merely the general purpoſe of the art, but the various means likewiſe by which this purpoſe may be effectuated: he has recourſe therefore immediately to the examples; and he ſpeaks himſelf to the paſſions of human nature while he is deſcribing the art by which theſe are excited *.

3. To the combination of qualities which we have enumerated as conſtituting excellence in this noble branch of philoſophy; we need only further add, as one adventitious but neceſſary advantage that experience which indicates a man,

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* I know no modern philoſophical performance in which the reader will find the qualities abovementioned more ſtrikingly united, than in Dr. Smith's excellent work, entitled, the Theory of Moral Sentiments. This moral anatomiſt, inſtead of being ſatisfied with general exhibitions of his ſubject, or of running (like the Greek writer abovementioned) into looſe declamation, either ſtrikes out in a ſtyle of maſterly compoſition ſuch criteria as come home to "men's buſineſs and boſoms," and require no illuſtration; or confirms by ſuch happily ſelected examples thoſe remarks whoſe truth is leſs obviouſly conſpicous, as (in the author's opinion) evinceth the trueſt philoſophical diſcernment.

"Qui

"Qui mores hominum multorm vidit,"

who has examined the various manners of mankind. The knowledge derived from this ſource produceth effects as widely diverſified as any ſpecies of what kind ſoever. Thus the conſequence of ſuch intercourſe upon a mind in which the underſtanding is ſuperficial, commonly is to produce a profuſion of "wiſe ſaws," (as Shakeſpeare calls them), a number of unexceptionable but unintereſting obſervations on manners and character; good admonitions, ſententious maxims, and rules of life, whoſe fitneſs and propriety no man calls in queſtion, becauſe, whether true or falſe, they reach not the caſes of individuals, and therefore become not the objects of inveſtigation. On the contrary when the judgment is good, but the imagination deficient, ſuch remarks as this experience may ſuggeſt, however ſolid, will be uniform, and calculated rather to diſplay one branch of character than to inveſtigate a whole. It is therefore only when this acquiſition falls to the ſhare of a mind in which both theſe powers are

concen-

concentrated, and co-operate with each other that the heart of man will be laid open, and ſuch criteria fixed upon as develope the movements however complicated of this various machine.

It would be a matter of no difficulty to ſhow that this facility of entering deeply into the feelings of the heart diſtinguiſh principally thoſe authors who will always ſtand in the higheſt rank of eminence. Take away the various and exquiſite ſhadeings of the characters in the Iliad; the talkative experience of Neſtor, the wary circumſpection of Ulyſſes, the noble boldneſs of Diomed, the implacable rage of Achilles; the fondneſs of Priam, of Hecuba, and of Andromache, ſo juſtly varied, and ſo delicately painted; take away theſe circumſtances, and the merit of this immortal work would be no more than that of a picture, in which the moſt luxuriant drapery might adorn objects whoſe lifeleſs ſimilarity the eye would ſoon contemplate with ſatiety and diſguſt. He muſt on the other hand be a very frigid critic indeed who can ſurvey that ſeries of theſe ſo nobly

ſupported

ſupported through the whole of this work, and ſuppoſe the author to deſerve from this detail no higher praiſe than that of judgment. Deep penetration, exquiſite ſenſibility, and experience, under the direction of theſe, of the avenues that lead moſt directly to the heart, conſtitute, in conjunction with the moſt copious imagination, the character of a man capable of conducting a work of this nature. The manner in which theſe are ſeparately required to operate, and the ſpheres aſſigned to each in this work, may be ſeverally collected from the preceding obſervations.

III. As we have now endeavoured to trace philoſophy in its moſt extenſive ſenſe, to its original ſource in the various combination of intellectual powers; let us proceed to try in this philoſophical hiſtory (as it may be termed) of the ſciences and arts, whether we can obſerve likewiſe in ſome other views of the faculties formerly referred to, the origin of that ſcience which records the various tranſactions of men from the earlieſt periods of ſociety.—Before, however, we enter more immediately

diately into this diſquiſition, it may be neceſſary to ſtate the difference betwixt the didactic and the narrative manner.

Hiſtory, when we conſider it as the means of conveying inſtruction by example, muſt be allowed to poſſeſs advantages above the didactic or philoſophical manner, proportioned to the degree of influence which example exerts over the practice of mankind beyond that of cold and inanimated precept. The name likewiſe of a profeſſed teacher carries along with it a certain idea of ſuperiority, which is always admitted with reluctance; and which, joined with the circumſtance above-mentioned, acts as a powerful counterpoiſe, to the good effects of which this ſcience is naturally productive. Senſible of this diſadvantage, the moſt eminent philoſophers have, in all ages, endeavoured to compenſate it by adopting as far as the ſeverity of their profeſſion would admit, the inſinuating graces of ſiſter arts, in the ſame manner as a man of a coarſe and diſagreeable aſpect will naturally deſire to ſupply the defect of regular features and com-

complexional beauty, by elegant improvement and a captivating addreſs. For this purpoſe we not only find the dialogue manner of compoſition fixed upon by the maſters of this ſcience to render their doctrines at the ſame time agreeable and intereſting *; but in the pourtray of ſcenery †, and even in developing argument, theſe admit, upon ſome occaſions, figures borrowed from the arts of eloquence and poetry, in whoſe uſe they are neceſſarily required to be ſparing from the nature of their ſubject.

What the philoſopher thus obtains with much difficulty, by calling in foreign and

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* Of this kind every reader knows are the principal parts of the writings of the great Roman philoſopher, as well of the Greek, whom the former profeſſedly imitated.

† Take the following deſcription as an example from the Phædrus of Plato. Η τε γαρ πλατανος αυτη μαλα αμφιλαφης τε και υψηλη τε και αγνε το υψος, και το συσκιον παγκαλον και ως ακμην εχει το ανθος, ως αν ευωδεςατον παρεχοι τον τοπον· Ηγε αν πηγη χαριεςατη υπο της πλατανε ῥει μαλα ψυχρου υδατος, &c. There are other fine circumſtances in the deſcription of this ſhade, in which the philoſophers recline to diſcourſe of eloquence.

adventitious

adventitious aid, the hiſtorian can accompliſh with much greater eaſe, as the materials which he is required to mould into proportion are ſuch as neceſſarily awaken attention, and engage the mind in an uſeful and intereſting procedure. This circumſtance it is that gives the narrative manner ſo much advantage above the former. In the explication of a philoſophical theory, a ſeries of cloſe reaſoning or of abſtracted obſervation is carried on; and ſentiments connected with, and ſupported by each other, form the great objects of the work. In hiſtory, on the other hand, theſe as forming in ſome meaſure but ſecondary views, and required to grow out of ſome preceding narration, arreſt the attention of a reader in a very forcible manner, and when judiciouſly introduced, make a laſting impreſſion on his memory. Thus it happens, that a well written hiſtory is more univerſally uſeful than any other work. The medium through which inſtruction is conveyed, we are here diſpoſed to contemplate with pleaſure; and while the manners are tinctured by the examples

exhibited

exhibited in ſo faithful a mirror *, a ſenſible mind receives an entertainment of the moſt agreeable kind, by obſerving the various operation of qualities both intellectual and moral on the characters of men.

Theſe general remarks on hiſtorical compoſition (the particular conſideration of which belongs more properly to a ſubſequent ſection) will aſſiſt us in aſcertaining that union of intellectual powers which is neceſſary to conſtitute the perfection of ſo beneficial a ſcience.

As the hiſtorian therefore poſſeſſeth advantages from the nature of his profeſſion ſuperior to thoſe of the didactic author, and as his ends may be accompliſhed with greater facility, it will follow, that a moderate, but as nearly as poſſible an equal proportion of the powers whoſe offices we have endeavoured to point out, will be ſufficient to effectuate all the purpoſes to

* "Hiſtoria illuſtri appellatione donata ſit, cum magiſtra morum nominetur, quod qui ad eam ſe conferunt, inſtructi ad vitæ caſus, ſemperque inde meliores abeunt." Strad. Proluſ. Academ. p. 45.

which

which this ſcience can be rendered ſubſer-ſervient. In philoſophy the underſtanding is employed in the ſelection and diſpoſition of ſuch abſtracted ideas as the mind draws from having formed an accurate judgment of its own operation, or from experience with regard to mankind in general. In eloquence the power of invention is eminently diſplayed likewiſe, not only as beſtowing high and expreſſive colour on the objects that paſs before it, but in fixing upon new topics of perſuaſion, and preſſing theſe home with that irreſiſtible energy which penetrates the heart. But in hiſtory as the judgment employed in the collation of materials ſupplied wholly by others, exerts not an act equally ſtrenuous, as when it regulates thoſe which owe their exiſtence to the mind's penetrating and intenſe contemplation of itſelf; ſo the imagination in the ſame manner that works only from facts and incidents laid before it, from which it is not permitted to deviate, diſplays not the ſame ſtrength, verſatility, and exuberance, as when employed in ſpheres more juſtly appropriated

to its exerciſe, it is with more propriety denominated the *power of invention* *.

Hiſtory therefore, as it purſues a middle courſe betwixt the ſpheres of philoſophy and eloquence, demands a ſhare of every intellectual faculty, but no ſuch proportion of any ſeparate power as will turn the balance obviouſly to a ſide. The truth of this remark will be acknowledged moſt readily, when we conſider the ends which this writer is required to accompliſh.

An hiſtorian then ought to poſſeſs a clear and ſolid judgment, otherwiſe he will not only fail of giving a due proportion to the various members of his work, but

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* What we have ſaid here of eloquence may be likewiſe applied to poetry. "Le merite principal de l'hiſtorien (ſays an elegant critic) ne conſiſte pas comme celui de poete. Le merite principal de l'hiſtoire eſt d'enricher notre memoire & de former notre jugement; mais le merite principal de la poeſie conſiſte a nous toucher." Ref. Critiques ſur la Poeſ. &c. v. ii. p 283. Let us hear Ariſtotle on the ſame ſubject. Ο γαρ Ιϛορικος και ο ϖοιητης ϗ το η εμμετρα λεγειν η ἀμετρα διαΦερουσιν'—αλλα τϗτο διαΦερει τω του μεν τϗ γενομενα λεγειν του δε οιου αν γενοιτο. Διο και Φιλοσοφωτερον και σπϗδαιοτερον Ποιησις Ιϛοριας εϛιν' Ποιητ.

unequal

unequal particularly to the more difficult parts of his profeſſion, the defect will become remarkably conſpicuous when he is required to diſentangle truth from a multitude of obſcure and perplexing incidents, or to reconcile details of the ſame tranſaction that are ſeemingly contradictory. He ought to poſſeſs likewiſe an adequate proportion of imagination, as without this his compoſition will have too much uniformity, and he will be unable to treat the different branches of his ſubject in the manner adapted moſt properly to each. A conſiderable ſhare of Diſcernment is likewiſe neceſſary to make him improve upon a diſtant hint, when he is not furniſhed with full and digeſted materials; to aſſiſt him in examining characters to the bottom, and in painting theſe ſo juſtly as that they may appear to be inferences deduced from the narration of previous incidents.—In ſhort, that experience of mankind which is acquired by having mixed in ſociety, is requiſite to give compaſs to his views, and to render his obſer-

vations on men and things ſuch as characteriſe human nature; and, to ſum up all, ſtrength, and even pathos, is upon ſome occaſions neceſſary to complete the character of this writer, that he may hold up an action eminently virtuous to the admiration, or a vicious one to the contempt and deteſtation of mankind!

From this ſhort account of the various purpoſes of hiſtory, and of the intellectual powers as adapted to carry theſe effectually into execution, it muſt be evident, that though there are perhaps other departments of literature in which ſome of the ſuperior faculties act in a larger ſphere, or appear in more vigorous exertion; yet there is none more happily calculated to diſplay different kinds, as well as degrees of excellence, by calling every faculty by which the human mind is diſtinguiſhed, ſucceſſively into action. Theſe, however, with other advantages of this noble and inſtructive ſcience, will fall to be more particularly detailed, when from having viewed it in its origin, as indicating a peculiar com-

combination of mental powers, we come to conſider it in the more extenſive light of a ſpecies of Compoſition.

SECTION VII.

Of that Combination of the intellectual Faculties which gives riſe to the arts of Poetry and Criticiſm.

AN ancient philoſopher of diſtinguiſhed name, aſſigns (I cannot ſay with what propriety) admiration as the ſource of philoſophy *. Whatever may be in this, we may ſurely, with at leaſt equal truth, judge it to have occaſioned the firſt *poetic* effuſions †, as in proportion to that degree of this paſſion with which the mind was tranſported upon having contemplated the

* Μαλα φιλοσοφον τουτο το παθος το θαυμαζειν. Ου γαρ αλλη αρχη φιλοσοφιας η αυτη. Πλατων. Θεαιτ.

† Οι πρωτα μεν βλεποντες εβλεπον ματην·
Κλυοντες ουκ εκουον· αλλ' ονειρατων
Αλιγκιοι μορφαισι του μακρου χρονου
Εφυρον εικη παντα. Αισχυλ. Προμηθ.

works of nature, muſt have been the ſublimity of thoſe divine hymns in which were celebrated the perfections of the author. As ſoon, therefore, as men began to exerciſe their reaſon in tracing at the ſame time the exiſtence and attributes of the ſupreme mind, what we denominate lyric poetry received its origin from a warm imagination eyeing the more ſtupendous works of the deity, and ariſing from theſe to contemplate their original.

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Muſæ
Accipiant, cælique vias & ſidera monſtrent, &c.
Geor. ii. 475.

Such glorious objects as theſe a great genius naturally beholds with that high enjoyment which this power of the mind derives from having dwelt intenſely on the ſublime and the wonderful. This branch of his ſubject, however, the author hath treated at ſuch length in a former eſſay, that it would be wholly improper to reſume on the preſent occaſion, what hath already been advanced on it *.

* See Eſſay on Lyr. Poet. lett. ii.

Suppoſing

Suppoſing then this high and inchanting ſpecies of poetic Compoſition to have received its origin and improvement from the cauſe above-mentioned, let us try whether from different views of the human mind as variouſly impreſſed by ſurrounding objects, we can account for the riſe and improvement of thoſe other branches of this art which are conſidered as the moſt important.

That deſire of imitating *, which our great critic aſſigns as the ſource of all poetic excellence, operates upon the mind either inſtantaneouſly as the objects of external nature are repreſented by the ſenſes, and imagination ſet at work to copy the features of ſome admired original; or it works from ſuch materials as are more gradually ſupplied by reflection and experience, and forms by theſe means repre-

* Εοικασι δε γεννησαι μεν ολως την ωοιητικην αιτιαι δυο και αυται φυσικαι· το ΜΙΜΕΙΣΘΑΙ ΣΥΜΦΥΤΟΝ τοις ανθρωποις, &c. Και αρμονια και ῥυθμος εξ αρχης οι ωεφυκοτες ωρος αυτα μαλιςα κατα μικρου ωροαγοντες εγεννησαν την Ποιησιν. Αριςοτ. ωερι Ποιητ. κεφ. δ.

ſentations of ſentiments, characters, actions, and incidents; either diſtinct from each other, or ſtanding in connection, as beautiful and expreſſive pictures of the great drama of human life.—To the former of theſe very little attention will convince us, that we owe the deſcriptive; and to the latter the more complex ſpecies of poetic Compoſition.

1. Imagination, when it contemplates the objects of deſcriptive poetry, fluctuates naturally for ſome time and wanders from one ſcene to another before a ſeries adapted to its original propenſity irreſiſtibly determines its choice; but this little irreſolution in the ſelection of a ſubject ſerves only to indicate that no accidental aſſemblage of external objects, however juſtly preſented by the ſenſes, can arreſt the attention of the mind in ſuch a manner as to produce imitation, while the ſphere is not juſtly preſented which it is fitted by nature to occupy. As ſoon as this aſſemblage occurs, the mind becomes ſenſible of its ſtrength, and falling at once into its proper

proper track, ſurveys the objects with pleaſure, and imitates theſe with facility.

This inſtantaneous perception, however, of the ſphere adapted naturally to its choice, we are not to ſuppoſe exiſting in the mind independently (as ſome philoſophers ſeem to think that all inſtantaneous perceptions do) of the faculty of reaſon *. This power approves without any

* When cloſely examined, I am perſuaded that no philoſopher ever meant to conſider inſtinct (as it is termed) and reaſon as intellectual powers *really* diſtinct from, and independent of each other. This diſtinction however is *ſeemingly* made by thoſe who define the reaſoning faculty to be that by which the mind acquires the knowledge of truth, in conſequence of progreſſionary evidence; and the inſtinctive or intuitive power is that which decides *inſtantaneouſly* of the truth or falſhood of certain propoſitions, and is termed a *ſenſe*, from this quickneſs of perception. The following obſervations are thrown together to prevent readers from miſapprehending the meaning of either term, and to ſhew that no diſtinction of this kind can poſſibly ſubſiſt.—It is undoubtedly a truth, as clear as any mathematical axiom whatever, that of two objects wholly diſtinct from each other, we can conceive either to exiſt ſeparately. If, therefore, there are truths of any kind which this inſtinctive or intuitive power

any regular ſeries of argument of a choice adapted with propriety to the character; but

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power of the mind perceives without the aid of reaſon, it will follow, that there are propoſitions ſo obvious as to be approved by a mind in which this faculty does not exiſt. Let us take then the ſimpleſt of theſe propoſitions, that two and two make four;—and ſuppoſe it repreſented to a perſon not diſordered in underſtanding, but wholly deprived of that faculty; would this intuitive truth be inſtantly perceived by ſuch a perſon, or would any idea be conveyed in conſequence of repeating it? No man ſurely will aſſert that there would. It will perhaps be ſaid, that there is in this reaſoning a petitio principii; ſince reaſon is here without proof ſuppoſed to perform the office of this *common ſenſe*, and the example we have adduced is one in which both being annihilated, a mind cannot properly be ſaid to have exiſtence. But we ſhall be convinced, with a little attention, that the power (whatever deſignation we apply to it) by which we deduce effects from a cauſe, or inveſtigate a cauſe from its effects, is in no other reſpect different from that ſenſe (as it is called) by which we perceive the truth of the ſimpleſt axiom, than as in the former inſtances it makes an exertion, which in the latter is unneceſſary. 'We have mentioned one propoſition purely intuitive. Let us try another, to comprehend which, ſome degree of reaſon muſt be neceſſary. At a very conſiderable diſtance from the ſhore, I obſerve a ſmall ſpeck, ſcarce to be diſtinguiſhed from a cloud, and about whoſe nature I remain for ſome time uncertain.

but it approves in conſequence of diſcerning this propriety, in the ſame manner as the

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tain. Common ſenſe it will be ſaid, or inſtinct, is the power by which (having once diſcovered that this is a ſhip) I know its real to be different from its apparent magnitude, while yet at a diſtance. Though this is far from being ſelf-evident to me in any ſenſe of the word whatever; yet let us for once ſuppoſe it to be ſo. As the ſhip draws nearer, and the ſails, maſts, cordage and mariners, are ſucceſſively diſplayed; I become curious to know the cauſe for which it moves in a particular direction. Here an effect is immediately traced up to its cauſe, though the proceſs is indeed abundantly obvious. For as ſoon as it is known that the ſhip is moved upon the water, by the wind operating in any way whatever, it will follow that its direction muſt be determined by that of the wind; and as ſoon as the cauſe ſhall ceaſe to operate, the effect (i. e. the motion) ariſing from it muſt ſubſide likewiſe. This is, indeed, ſomewhat more complex than the propoſition that two and two make four:—yet I will leave any reader to determine, whether a perſon incapable of underſtanding the former of theſe truths, would have any diſtinct idea conveyed to his mind by the latter —Will it be ſaid that it is inſtinct or common ſenſe, which equally takes cognizance of both propoſitions? I ſhall then be glad to know at what point this intuition ſtops, and where reaſon begins. Does it trace effects from any particular cauſe? or, vice verſa, a cauſe from its effects?—Inſtinct is then ſurely not different from reaſon; and is uſed only to expreſs the ſimpleſt exertion

the eye which decides of minute proportions from an accurate inſpection of ſome particular

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ertion of that faculty. Is it again uſed to ſignify that *ſenſe* by which the mind perceives the truth of certain propoſitions which are termed ſelf-evident, becauſe, without any conſideration of cauſe or effect, theſe are the immediate objects of internal ſenſation, in the ſame manner as external appearances are of the ſenſes?—It hath been already ſhewn, that where the power which traceth the relation betwixt an effect and a cauſe ceaſeth to operate, this inſtinct immediately ſubſides along with it; and as neither of theſe can exiſt ſeparately, they muſt in fact be the ſame.—Was it neceſſary to purſue this thread of argument ſtill further, we might obſerve that as this inſtinct, or common ſenſe, cannot by any operation be diſtinguiſhed from reaſon when conſidered as an internal perception, on the one hand, ſo neither on the other has it the leaſt connection with, or dependence upon thoſe external organs of perception which we denominate the ſenſes. The eye of an ideot will preſent to him a tree, a horſe, or a wall, as diſtinctly as that of a wiſe man; his ear in the ſame manner will be impreſſed by ſounds. Suppoſe him to be deprived of either of theſe ſenſes, the remaining four will ſtill be diſtinct from each other, and external objects will operate as uſual upon their various organs. But does any ſuch diſtinction as this take place betwixt reaſon and inſtinct? When we take away the power which inveſtigates cauſes and effects, does that remain which perceives the truth of a geometrical axiom in the ſame manner as hearing when

particular object, obſerves with eaſe that harmony which ariſeth from a general correſpondence of parts in ſome magnificent ſtructure. The laſt of theſe deciſions therefore, may with equal propriety be ſuppoſed to take place without the inter-

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when the ſight is removed, feeling when we are deprived of both; and any of the five, when the others are obliterated? The contrary of this we have already evinced.—Upon the whole, this diſtinction can only be made by thoſe who have not attended properly to the various operations of reaſon. It may require a long proceſs of evidence to render a propoſition obvious to me, whoſe truth another man may perceive and acknowledge as ſoon as it is laid down. But does it follow from this, that the faculty of my mind which takes cognizance of this truth is *eſſentially different* from that which perceives it of his?—Surely not. His underſtanding in conſequence either of its ſuperior comprehenſion, or of having been long accuſtomed to a certain ſtrain of obſervation, may immediately ſupply the intermediate proceſs by which an end is obtained; but it is ſtill the ſame power acting in one inſtance with rapidity, and in the other proceeding with coolneſs and circumſpection, by which both are conducted to the ſame period. This remark holds equally of every propoſition whatever. Intuition, as diſtinguiſhed from reaſon, is that power by which a mind is ſuppoſed to have before it, at one view, the whole ſeries of cauſes and effects, and in this ſenſe it can only be predicated of the Supreme Being.

poſition

poſition of ſight or feeling, as the other without that of underſtanding.

Led in this manner at laſt into its proper train, imagination falls immediately to work, to copy ſuch draughts as have made upon it the moſt lively and forcible impreſſion. But imagination left to itſelf would form an imitation which however ſtriking, would rather preſent a reſemblance of ſome ſcattered features.

Deſinet in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne,

than that of a whole proportioned figure; much leſs a ſeries of theſe, reflecting mutual light upon each other, and ſtanding in the happieſt combination. This harmonious concurrence of objects diverſified from each other, to produce one effect on the mind, and the beauty of each object when viewed apart, ariſing from the light in which this is preſented to it, denominates that power of perceiving the juſteſt attitudes, and the moſt delicate expreſſions which is known by the name of Taſte; and whoſe influence is peculiarly conſpicuous in the delineation of external forms. By this internal ſenſe (as philoſophers have

have denominated it) objects are perceived immediately to bear a certain relation to each other, which even the ſuperior faculties of the mind, when conſidered apart, would have been diſqualified to trace; and in the ſphere of deſcriptive poetry it either adjuſts the illuſtrations with elegance and propriety to their correſponding originals when the work is going on; or it qualifies the reader, though perhaps unable himſelf to execute with correctneſs and maſtery, to judge with the utmoſt preciſion of this correſpondence, and to feel with exquiſite ſenſibility the effect ariſing from it. The objects of this quality, and the powers by whoſe combination it is conſtituted, we ſhall ſoon have occaſion to detail at more length;—its influence on this branch of the ſubject it is juſt ſufficient to have mentioned.

As it is therefore neceſſary that a deſcriptive poet ſhould be capable of perceiving remote connections, and of imitating beauties of which few are qualified to take cognizance; ſo the effect ariſing from the union of the reaſoning and inventive faculty,

culty, will be as conſpicuous in this, as in any ſphere whatever. Thoſe moral obſervations in particular, which are judiciouſly made to grow out of a deſcription of the external beauties of nature; and which, in conſequence of the pleaſing ſcenery that ſoothes and delights the imagination, convey inſtruction to the mind at the moſt favourable moment; diſcover the writer's judgment by the juſtneſs of their diſpoſition, and the conſiſtency they give to his performance; his imagination, by the beauty of that vehicle in which theſe are conveyed; and his taſte, by an happy ſelection of the fitteſt words, and a train of ſentiment carried preciſely to that point where the mind, gratified but not fatigued, returns with pleaſure to the principal ſubject.—Nor is it an inconſiderable or common ſhare of theſe combined qualities by which excellence in this branch of poetry is conſtituted. The wild, the ſublime, and the magnificient in nature, indicate not, when painted in the richeſt and moſt appropriated colours, more grandeur of imagination, and juſtneſs of perception, than

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the purpoſes which theſe may be made to ſerve by inſpiring great and exalted conceptions of the Author of nature; or by raiſing the thoughts above little and tranſitory objects to the contemplation of ſuch as are noble and eternal; theſe laſt diſcover the compaſs of an enlightened underſtanding, operating in a ſphere at once dignified and comprehenſive. Even in the ſport and paſtime of fancy, when the ſimpleſt beauties of rural ſcenery are delineated by her pencil, and the ſimpleſt occupations are aſcribed to the inhabitants, a ſhare of judgment much more conſiderable than we are apt to ſuppoſe is neceſſary to render the images, ſentiments, and expreſſion juſt ſuch as the ſubject requires; and an exquiſite internal perception of genuine beauty to diſtinguiſh elegance from ruſticity, and to ſeparate a ſimple from a florid or inſipid imitation.

II. From this detail of the intellectual powers as combining to accompliſh thoſe purpoſes to which a juſt diſplay of external nature may be rendered ſubſervient, let us follow the mind in the more ab-

ſtracted contemplation of its own internal operations, and obſerve the effects that moſt naturally reſult from it. By conſidering in this manner the paſſions and affections of mankind in diſtinct points of view, we ſhall comprehend moſt readily that union of the nobler faculties by which theſe are happily imitated, and exhibit ſtriking repreſentations of character and ſentiments.

1. As the objects of our ſenſes vary their appearances at different ſeaſons, and preſent to us aſpects extremely remote, if not ſeemingly incongruous, upon many occaſions; the human mind in the ſame manner, that great object of all our reſearches, when guided at one time by reaſon, diſturbed at another by paſſion, and driven at a third by a precipitate and irreſiſtible impulſe to ſome irrational conduct, receives expreſſions as diverſified in every reſpect as the former, and will make impreſſions not leſs various and lively upon an attentive examination. To effectuate by means of theſe the great purpoſe of conveying inſtruction, is equally the ulti-

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mate aim of the philoſopher and the poet, who in the higher branches of his art unites the ends of philoſophy with the more agreeable ones of his own profeſſion. The means however by which theſe accompliſh the ſame general purpoſe are very different, and ſerve to indicate that concurrence of the mental powers by which each of theſe (the laſt in particular) ought to be diſtinguiſhed.

Let us ſuppoſe two men with both theſe characters contemplating the human mind in the earlieſt period of ſociety, with the view of ſtudying attentively its different phænomena, and of inſtructing mankind by their obſervations. The one obſerving many effects ariſing from the ſame general principles variouſly modified, whoſe ſeeming incongruity perplexeth him at firſt, attempts, as the beſt method of eradicating the moſt pernicious, to inveſtigate the cauſe from which each derives its origin. By accompliſhing this purpoſe he ſuppoſeth juſtly that he will at the ſame time diſcover the beſt means of procuring happineſs to himſelf, and of communicating

this ineſtimable benefit to mankind in general. Our philoſopher therefore engageth from theſe motives in the ſearch of truth, and in conſequence of a knowledge of the human mind, acquired by accurate obſervation, and rendered comprehenſive from experience, becomes qualified to eſtabliſh rules of conduct, and to fix ſociety by laws that indicate thorough acquaintance with the human heart upon a ſolid and permanent foundation. Here then we obſerve the origin of moral inveſtigation. But by what method ſhall theſe important ends be brought about? Should we put this queſtion to our philoſopher, he would undoubtedly reply;—"I conſi-
"der man as an intelligent and rational
"agent, whoſe judgment it is neceſſary to
"convince by evidence before motives of
"any kind can operate on his practice.
"To his judgment therefore I appeal, and
"having firſt detected the cauſes of his
"errors by a clear and accurate inveſtiga-
"tion; I endeavour to lay before him
"ſuch rules of conduct as are adapted moſt
"properly to remedy his defects, and to
"aſcer-

" aſcertain to him the poſſeſſion of ſuch " objects as promiſe him real and perman- " ent felicity *. Of the accuracy of this " inveſtigation, and of the importance of " thoſe motives by which new principles " are enforced; of theſe circumſtances rea- " ſon muſt finally decide; and I have no " other merit than that of preſenting to " this power ſuch conſideration as may " determine its choice to the greateſt advan- " tage."—Such would be the language of our philoſopher on this ſubject.—Let us next attend to the practice of the poet, acting in the higher ſpheres of his profeſſion with the ſame general purpoſe as the for-

* By ſome ſuch method as this it muſt undoubtedly be that philoſophy is ſaid to perform the wonders which have been aſcribed to it. The ſtory of Socrates is well known: Cicero gives us another example of the ſame kind, if not a ſtill more ſtriking one. " Stilponem Megaricum philoſophum acutum ſané hominem & probatum illis temporibus accepimus. Hunc ſcribunt ipſius familiares & ebrioſum & mulieroſum fuiſſe, neque hoc ſcribunt vituperantes ſed potius ad laudem: vitioſam enim naturam ab eo ſic edomitam & compreſſam eſſe doctrina ut nemo unquam vinolentum illum, nemo in eo libidinis veſtigium viderit." Cicer. de Fato.

mer, but fixing on expedients to accompliſh it extremely different *.

He likewiſe, we ſhall ſuppoſe, obſerves the dangerous conſequences of indulging the paſſions, and as his own have probably greater ſtrength than thoſe of the former, he will be ſtruck more forcibly with the neceſſity of reſtraining theſe within proper limits. He falls to work therefore with this great end kept conſtantly in his eye; and having obſerved the manner in which the paſſions operate on the characters of mankind, he throws off ſuch reſemblances by lively and ſtriking imitations as tend to render virtuous conduct the object of attachment; and vicious practice, of deteſtation. For this purpoſe he either ſhows the pernicious tendency of vice by that ſtain which it throws upon characters the moſt dignified and exalted; or he points out the excellence of virtue

* Ου πεισομεθα Ησιοδι (ſays an able critic) επειδαν τινες τοιυτυ γενους τελευτησωσιν ως αρα οι μεν δαιμονες αγνοι επιχθονιοι τελεθουσιν. εσθλοι, αλεξικακοι φυλακες θνητων ανθρωπων. Πεισομεθα μεν ουν. ΕΡΜΟΓΕΝ. περι ΕΥΡΕΣ,

by

by the luſtre it ſheds on perſons diſtinguiſhed by no ſuperiority of intellectual powers: he holds up a faithful mirror to mankind in general *; and by preſenting *examples* which all are qualified to contemplate with impartiality, corrects the bad conſequences of that ſelf-love which commonly renders us partial to ourſelves.

Our poetical inſtructor attends likewiſe in this ſublime ſphere of his profeſſion, to ſuch ſtrokes as make the moſt immediate and laſting impreſſion on the heart. Theſe he judiciouſly contrives to preſs with irreſiſtible energy, and to excite the emotions ariſing from all by varying the circumſtances in a natural and happy manner from diſtreſs to proſperity, thus at the ſame

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* Δια των πεπραγμενων τε διασκευαζοντος οφειλοντος πλατυναι το πραγμα μονον. ου μεντοι γε ητε αιτιαις, ητε λογισμοις τοσουτον ητε αλλω τινι επιχειρηματι αλλα μονω τω τροπω. Διασκευαζεται μεν γαρ παντως εκ τι των της περιςασεως. Και ὁ τι δ' αν εκεινων η τω τροπω πλατυνεται. Και μετα τε τροπε, και προσωποποιας οια εικος ην τελεισθαι εφ' εκαςε των πρατ̃ομενων, και λεχθηναι δυναμενων παρα των εμφαινομενων προσωπων εν τη διατυπωσει. Id. p. 180.

time ſoothing the imagination, inſtructing the judgment, and mending the heart. Such a proceſs of obſervation as this probably gave riſe to the drama and epopœa.

In this proceſs nothing will ſtrike a diſcerning reader more forcibly than the various operation of the intellectual powers attempting to accompliſh one purpoſe in the different ſpheres of their exerciſe. He will obſerve the underſtanding, in one caſe, effectuating its end by the ſimple medium of proof and inveſtigation; in the other he will trace judgment, in that arrangement of incidents which renders theſe adapted happily to produce a certain purpoſe; imagination, in their original invention, and in the glowing imagery which gives them colour and expreſſion; diſcernment he will perceive in thoſe maſterly ſtrokes by which the ſhades of a character are happily contraſted with its diſtinguiſhing excellencies; and exquiſite ſenſibility in that pathos of ſentiment and expreſſion which the heart appears to have dictated,

and

and by which the heart of the reader is penetrated.

The drama and the epopœa contemplated in this manner, as ariſing from the combination of all the intellectual powers, making ſeparately the moſt ſtrenuous exertion, will appear (the former particularly) to have called theſe into action with an energy proportioned to the ſtrength and variety of thoſe manners from which an example is to be formed. As theſe laſt therefore varied conſiderably in the more cultivated periods of ſociety from the uniform ſimplicity of its earlieſt ages, the dramatic poets diſcovered without doubt greater verſatility of mind, more knowledge of human nature, and deeper inſight into the motives by which the heart is actuated, who to the original imperfections ſuperadded a picture of the faſhionable vices and foibles of mankind, than he who conſidered man when his manners were ſimple and uniform, engaged in a leſs intricate and perplexing detail.

2. Of the firſt inventors of the drama we know little with any certainty, nor is this

this a matter of any great conſequence, as Æſchylus, the great reformer of this branch of poetry, found it in a ſtate of imperfection, which clearly ſhewed that in the preceding ages civilization had made but very little progreſs *. Manners at that time were ſtrong, but uniform; and as the wants of men were comparatively few, their virtues or vices lay open to detection. That it required however both addreſs and diſcernment, in every ſenſe of that word, to ſtrike off an exact imitation of thoſe qualities will be acknowledged without difficulty †. The paſſions of terror, anger, and

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* "Ignotum tragicæ genus inveniſſe Camœnæ
Dicitur & plauſtris vexiſſe poemata Thespis
Quæ canerent, agerentque peruncti fæcibus ora.
Poſt hunc perſonæ, pallæque repertor honeſtæ
Æſchylus, & modicis inſtravit pulpita tignis,
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.
Hor. de Art. Poet.

† The great ancient critic appears to have rather refined too much on his ſubject when he ſays that "tragedy exhibits an imitation not of men in general, "but of their actions; of the life for inſtance of ſome "individual, and of ſuch objects as conſtitute happi-"neſs or miſery: that happineſs conſiſts in action; "and though manners denominate the character, yet "it

and revenge, though theſe may be detected with greater facility, and perhaps pourtrayed in all their appearances with leſs difficulty than ſuch as are concealed behind the maſque of hypocriſy, or are contracted by an intercourſe with the diſſolute and luxurious part of mankind; yet when conſidered as exerted in particular circumſtances, or combined with certain qualities either intellectual or moral, cannot be painted as appropriated to characters without a knowledge of the human heart arguing at the ſame time diſcernment and experience.

Hiſtory however relates not any change ſo remarkable in the courſe of a few years as that which appears to have been

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"it is from theſe laſt that we decide of man as happy "or miſerable, in which light he is principally exhi- "bited in tragedy; that therefore a performance of "this kind cannot ſubſiſt without action, but may "without an imitation of manners." See the 6th ch. of his Poetics.—This is mere metaphyſical refinement.—It is certainly not true, that we judge of men as happy or miſerable only from their actions: theſe diſcover to us in general rather what men ought to be, than what they really are. Their *manners* upon particular occaſions, exhibit a much ſurer teſt, and it is the buſineſs of tragedy to take of both.

wrought

wrought upon the manners of the Athenians, betwixt the time of Æſchylus and that of his ſucceſſor Sophocles, who came only about thirty years behind him. This laſt poet found his country men eminent for their politeneſs, learning, elegance, and urbanity, of which they continued for ſo many ages to ſet mankind a pattern. The ſtage, whoſe reformation kept pace with refinement of manners in every other reſpect, had now received great improvement, not only from the dreſs and pronunciation of the actors, as regulated properly to the characters which each was to exhibit, but principally from the change made upon the chorus, which had formerly conſiſted of a promiſcuous croud, whoſe appearance frightened the ſpectators inſtead of producing entertainment; and whoſe numbers occaſioned unavoidable confuſion *.

In

* Before the time of Theſpis and Æſchylus, tragedy was wholly performed by the chorus. The former of theſe, ſenſible of the tedioufneſs and inſipid uniformity of this deſign, added to it one perſon as an actor,

In a ſtate likewiſe ſo variouſly modified as that of Athens, there aroſe in conſequence of the fields ſucceſſively opened to every paſſion of the human mind, a va-

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actor, but the diſproportion ſtill continued to be remarkable. An accident at laſt brought about a reformation. In the repreſentation of the Eumenides, the barbarous dreſſes of the chorus, which conſiſted of fifty perſons, frightened the women with child into miſcarriage, and the children into fits. Æſchylus, therefore, by contracting the number of perſons employed in the chorus, and by adding proportionably to the actors, rendered tragedy ſo juſt a repreſentation of manners and action as we ſee it at preſent. To this change introduced among the perſons he ſuperadded others with regard to machinery, decoration, and decorum. The former he effectuated by erecting a ſtage for the actors inſtead of a cart, which had formerly been employed; the latter, by cloathing them in the maſque, the buſkin, and the long robe; and the laſt, (by far the moſt important of all his alterations) by making his murders paſs behind the ſcenes, inſtead of being performed in ſight of the audience. It is on theſe accounts principally that he is ſo much celebrated by the ancients, Vid. Hor. ubi ſup. Phil. in Vit. Apollon. lib. vi. c. 6. Vit. Æſchy. ap. Stanleium, &c. In this reformed ſtate therefore Sophocles and Euripides found the theatre; and when we conſider that theſe men poſſeſſed themſelves great natural abilities, and found the manners of the Athenian people improved to the utmoſt, we ſhall ceaſe to wonder that their compoſition appears ſo much more correct and maſterly than that of their predeceſſors.

riety

riety of characters calculated peculiarly to give exerciſe to the invention of the dramatic poet, and from the dread of his rivals, the diverſity of his ſubjects, and the exquiſite taſte of his hearers, attentive to the ſlighteſt deviation from nature and propriety, that correctneſs of Compoſition took place, which indicates a judgment matured by exerciſe, and maintaining its pre-eminence over the other faculties. Thus in comic repreſentation, it became exceedingly difficult either to develope real vices ſhaded by a veil of the deepeſt hypocriſy, or to fix upon thoſe little flaws in characters of diſtinguiſhed eminence, which render an imitation ſo happily natural *. In tragic compoſition indeed the ſubjects

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* The diviſion of comedy among the Greeks into the old, the middle, and the new ſpecies is too generally known to be inſiſted on here at any length. In the firſt, criminal or ridiculous actions were not only painted in the ſtrongeſt colours, but the name of the man was publicly mentioned, and an indelible ſtigma fixed upon his character.

Si quis erat dignus deſcribi, quod malus, aut fur,

Quod

ſubjects continued at every period of ſociety to be of one kind, becauſe the poet ſoar-

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Quod mæchus foret, aut ficarius, aut alioqui
Famoſus, multa cum libertate notabant.
Hor. Sat. lib. iv. ſat. 1.

In the middle comedy, which took place when the Athenian ſtate drew nearer to an oligarchy, this licence was curbed, and the poet allowed to expoſe the actions, but forbid to name the perſon. The laſt ſpecies of comedy, without regard to individuals farther than as theſe may be delineated by the deſcription of particular virtues or vices, conſiſted wholly of ſuch repreſentations as exhibit a juſt picture of human life. It muſt be confeſſed that ſuch pieces of the celebrated Ariſtophanes as have reached the preſent times, are for the moſt part of the firſt mentioned ſpecies. This poet however muſt be allowed to have performed a taſk which does honour to his diſcernment, whatever diſcredit it may reflect upon him in other reſpects, when he expoſed the divine Socrates as an object of ridicule to the multitude, and gave mankind a conſpicuous evidence that any character, how exalted ſoever, may be placed in a ridiculous point of view, when the ſlighteſt flaw, or even virtuous indignation carried to an extreme, is expoſed by a man endowed with this dangerous talent. If there was any circumſtance exceptionable in the conduct of Socrates, it appears to have been his being too explicit on the ſubject of religion, (the moſt dangerous of all topics) and inſtilling prejudices againſt that of his country into the minds of his pupils, before he had ſubſtituted ſuch principles in its room, as might counterballance the bad conſequences ariſing from this proceeding.

ſoaring perpetually here in the region of the ſublime and pathetic, finds characters ſuited to his deſign among the great and unhappy of all ages. But here likewiſe it became neceſſary, that he ſhould attend more cloſely than formerly to the unity of his fable, to the conſiſtency of his charac-

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ceeding. He had likewiſe ſomewhat too unwarily abſented himſelf from the theatre when the comedies of that author were repreſented, which was a neglect not to be overlooked. See Rhymer's View of Tragedy, and Ælian's Various Hiſtory, b. ii. c. 13. Of this circumſtance in the conduct of this great philoſopher, Ariſtophanes, animated by the motive we have ſuggeſted, took immediate advantage. He intends to repreſent his eloquence as dangerous, and calculated to produce the moſt pernicious effects. "He feigns there-"fore that a countryman involved in debt ſent his ſon "to Socrates's ſchool that he might learn to cheat his "creditors. This young fellow is ſo well inſtructed "by the philoſopher, that he goes home, beats his fa-"ther, and then proves that he had acted very proper-"ly." The end propoſed here is perfectly obvious. But it is principally our preſent buſineſs to obſerve, that thorough knowledge of human nature, which was neceſſary to make Ariſtophanes ſucceed in his deſign, and that ſhare of penetration which is neceſſary to make an author diſcern amidſt ſo many excellencies as might overpower an ordinary mind, that little ſpeck by which all may be obſcured, and the ends defeated to which theſe might otherwiſe be rendered ſubſervient.

ters,

ters; and to the ſtrain of his compoſition, as preſerving a juſt medium betwixt bombaſt and meanneſs, a ſtyle equally remote from the ſtiffneſs of pedantry, and the rant of declamation.

Upon the whole, dramatic poetry, conſidered with regard to the faculties of the mind, requires principally the poet to be poſſeſſed of that diſcernment which we have ſhown to conſiſt of the union of imagination and judgment, and which requires the perpetual, and almoſt equal operation of both. The former of theſe powers is required rather to be ſtrong and perſpicacious in this branch of compoſition than florid and luxuriant, becauſe it is the buſineſs of the dramatic poet to repreſent man as a creature whom paſſion, inclination, and appetite often directs in the conduct of life; and paſſion never expreſſeth its feelings in imagery and metaphor *: the latter

* Some modern writers have indeed found a method of reconciling theſe circumſtances, and of making their heroes rave in the flowing ſtyle of rhetoric. How far they have followed nature in this conduct their readers muſt be left to determine. The ancients

latter ought to poſſeſs the two qualities of comprehenſion and preciſion, that it may at the ſame time regulate the plan, adjuſt the incidents to the characters, and direct with ſuch exquiſite propriety the time of throwing in thoſe ſtrokes which penetrate the heart as to render the whole piece eminently beautiful, and as nearly as poſſible perfect in its kind *. A mind capable of execut-

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certainly have both judged and acted in a very different manner. The Oedipus of Sophocles, upon the diſcovery of his guilt, expreſſeth his deſpair in the ſimpleſt, but at the ſame time in the moſt ſignificant words.

Ιω, ιω· τα παντ' αν εξικοι σαφη
Ω φως τελευταιον σε προσβλεψαιμι νυν, &c.

He recalls to his memory the places in which he had been educated, and every circumſtance contributes to heighten his miſery.

Ιω Κιθαιρων, τι μ' εδεχου!
Ω Πολυβε, και Κορινθε, και τα πατρια
Λογω παλαια δωμαθ' οιον αρα με
Καλλος κακων υπουλον εξετρεψατε.

Σοφοκλ. Οιδιπ. Τυρ.

* The poet quoted above, who appears to have been thoroughly acquainted with the human heart, excells particularly in this uncommon faculty of throwing out juſt at the proper ſeaſon thoſe exquiſite ſtrokes of paſſion,

executing with maſtery a performance of this kind, muſt poſſeſs likewiſe that exquiſite feeling either of pleaſure or pain, which renders the author not merely pre-

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ſion, or rather that perfect imitation of nature, by which every reader muſt be affected, becauſe the principles here wrought upon are common to all. The following verſes contain the moſt ſtriking examples of this kind I remember ever to have met with. Oedipus, reflecting on the ſtupendous ſeries of events by which he had been plunged in the blackeſt deſpair, exclaims in the agony of his thought

Ω γαμοι, γαμοι, εφυσαθ' ημας, και φυτευσαντες παλιν
Ανειτε ταυτον σπερμα και καπεδειξατε
Πατερας, αδελφους, παιδας αιμα εμφυλιον, &c.

From this ſcene his mind recoils with horror, and breaking from the thought, he wiſhes to drop into annihilation.

Ωπως ταχιστα προς θεων εξω με που
Καλυψατ' η φονευσατ'; η θαλασσιον
Εκριψατ' ενθα, μηποτ' εισοψεσθ' ετι, &c.

Nature herſelf ſpeaks in all this, and it cannot be peruſed without emotion. Yet the expreſſion is perfectly ſimple. The poet had judgment enough to diſcern that ornament here would have been equally uſeleſs and diſguſting. Oedipus talks the language of a man overwhelmed with deſpair. He is hurried by the remembrance of his crimes, which are expreſſed in very few words, to the deſire of inſtant death. This ſtroke is introduced juſt at the proper ſeaſon, and from this circumſtance is derived its pathos and energy.

ſent at every ſcene, but deeply intereſted in every tranſaction; and in proportion to the ſtrength or weakneſs of that ſenſibility in the author, will be that eager appetite, cloſs attention, or cool indifference with which the reader of diſcernment will peruſe his work.

3. From the preceding obſervations on the intellectual powers, as variouſly diſplayed in dramatic compoſition, we ſhall be enabled to point out with greater facility that union of theſe which gives riſe to the more complex ſpecies of the epopœa. Conſidered merely as a branch of Compoſition, authors have differed very much in their ſentiments of dramatic and epic poetry; and a great judge of eminence in both has pronounced a deciſion in favour of the former*. His ſentiments on this ſubject

* "Le poeme epique (ſays an ingenious critic) eſt ce qu'il'y a de plus grand & de plus noble dans la poeſie. C'eſt l'ouvrage le plus accompli de l'eſprit humain.—Il (poete heroique) faut de grandes images, & un eſprit encore plus grand pour les former. Enfin il faut un jugement ſi ſolide, un diſcernement ſi exquis, une ſi perfaite connoiſſance de la langue, dans laquelle on ecrit;

ſubject fall not particularly under our preſent examination. It is neceſſary only to obſerve on this ſubject, that whatever advantages tragedy derives from the perfection of its plan, as relating to one event *, from the ſhortneſs of its action, as calculated to arreſt attention more forcibly than the diffuſive and various tranſactions recorded by the epic poet †; from the ſimplicity of its fable, as admitting of no epiſodes ‡; and finally, from the external machinery of the theatre, the muſic, elocution, and geſticulation with which its exhibition is accompanied §; yet conſidered

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ecrit; une etude ſi conſtante, une meditation ſi profonde, une etendue de capacité ſi vaſte que les ſiecles entiers a peine peuvent produire un genie capable d'un poeme epique." Rap. Reflex. Poet. p. 126.

* Ετι το ελαττονι μηκει το τελος της μιμησεως εϛι. Αριϛ. περι Ποιητ. Κεφ. κϛ.

† Το ανθρωτερον ηδιον η πολλω κεραμενον τω χρονω. Λεγω δε οιον ει τις τον Οιδιπουν θειη τυ Σοφοκλεους εν επεσιν οσοις η Ιλιας. Id. ibid.

‡ Ετι ηττον μια οποιασουν η των εποποιων· Σημειον δε· εκ γαρ οποιασουν μιμησεως, πλειυς Τραγωδιαι γινονται. Ibid.

§ Επειτα διοτι παντ' εχει οσαπερ η Εποποια· Και

ed ſimply as indicating a certain combination of intellectual faculties, and requiring theſe to be exerted either with comparative ſtrength or variety; epic poetry has in theſe reſpects the advantages of this, and indeed of every ſpecies of compoſition whatſoever *. This truth will be rendered more obvious from the following conſiderations.

1. We have already ſeen that the moſt diſtinguiſhing ingredient of genius, the power of invention, diſplays in the drama rather ſtrength and perſpicacity than richneſs and luxuriance, becauſe it admits not in any eminent degree of thoſe glowing colours which are naturally and ſucceſs-

γαρ τω ΜΕΤΡΩ εξεσι χρησθαι, και οτι ϗ μικρον μερος την μουσικην και την οψιν εχει, δε ης τας ηδονας επισαυται εναργεσατα. Ibid.

* "La preſence de la divinité & le ſoin qu'une cauſe ſi auguſte doit prendre de l'action, oblige le poete a faire que cette action ſoit grande, importante, & conduit par des princes, & par des rois. Elle oblige auſſi de penſer & de parler d'une maniere relevée au deſſus du commun des hommes, & qui egale en quelque ſorte les perſonnes divines qu'il introduit. C'eſt a quoi ſert le langage poetique & figure & la majeſté du vers heroique." Boſſu du Poeme Epique, liv. i. p. 10.

fully

fully employed to render narration animated, or to diſplay in the happieſt attitudes the various objects of external nature. Eloquence in the ſame manner (which derives its origin from a ſimilar combination of the powers of the mind) confines this power principally to the invention of topics of perſuaſion, and to the office of conveying theſe with pathos and energy to the heart. Philoſophy and hiſtory exclude its incidents; but epic poetry affords the moſt unlimited range to this faculty in whatever point of view its exertions may be ſurveyed. Thus as the parent of picturesque and beautiful imagery, the whole compaſs of objects, whether of nature or of art, that fall within the ſphere of human inveſtigation lie promiſcuouſly open to its uſe. As the poet varies his ſcenery in the courſe of his narration; as by ſhowing his principal perſonages in various lights he excites alternately in the minds of his readers admiration, terror, pity, indignation, or diſtreſs; he may heighten every ſucceſſive proſpect by ſignificant and appropriated illuſtrations, and

obtain by theſe means every purpoſe to which the *poetic* art in the trueſt ſenſe of that epithet can be rendered ſubſervient. Theſe advantages the epic poet derives from carrying on an uniform narration of events, inſtead of aſſuming always, like the dramatic writer, the ſtyle of converſation, which (as we have already ſeen) contracts the range of imagination, and preſents to it a leſs diverſified ſeries of objects. Here too the bard has an advantage over the hiſtorian, even in his own ſphere of narration, becauſe the latter is confined to the ſimple detail of facts, on which it is neither neceſſary nor proper that he ſhould frequently throw the glowing colours of the faculty we are contemplating; whereas in the work of the former theſe are conſidered as indiſpenſably requiſite.

2. When we again take a view of imagination as inventing an endleſs variety of new and ſurpriſing incidents, the epic poet is here likewiſe eminently diſtinguiſhed by the uſes he may make of this faculty above all other writers whatever: while

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an author is confined by the rules of the drama to a ſhort ſpace of time, and to incidents, however ſurpriſing, yet tending without the leaſt digreſſive circumſtance to bring on the principal cataſtrophe; here, on the contrary, every figure of this miniature appears extended to its full proportion. The greatneſs of the action renders a conſiderable length of time neceſſary to complete the deſign, and in the conduct of the fable, every event within the verge of poetic probability may with propriety be introduced. Unanimity and diſcord, wiſdom and folly, ſtrength and weakneſs, anger and friendſhip, war and love, theſe with all the paſſions of human nature, wrought into characters, and diſplayed alternately in a ſeries of events conſtantly diverſified, attract the attention of the reader as powerfully, and render him almoſt as deeply intereſted as if every part of the buſineſs was really his own, and his happineſs or miſery was connected with the event.

Add to all this the beauty of thoſe inchanting epiſodes, which relieve the mind

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of the reader ſo agreeably, after having followed out for ſome time the principal branches of the fable; and the rich and various machinery which fancy is here at liberty to contrive with the utmoſt licence, and to paint in the moſt animated colours; and with theſe advantages in its favour, there is perhaps no other ſphere whatever in which imagination may diſplay its power of inventing incidents in an equal degree. This advantage is indeed univerſally allowed to epic poetry, even by thoſe who conſider the dramatic as upon the whole a more perfect ſpecies of Compoſition *, and it is therefore unneceſſary to inſiſt on it any longer.

Thoſe ſentimental beauties likewiſe, which in conſequence of their novelty, or

* Thus Ariſtotle, in a paſſage quoted above, acknowledges that the plan of an epic poem is more complex than that of the drama, and that ſeveral tragedies might be made of one. It is ſomewhat odd that our great critic ſhould adduce this circumſtance in proof of the excellence of dramatic above epic poetry, as the complex nature of the fable in the latter naturally calls into exerciſe the intellectual powers in more various combinations, and when properly executed diſcovers an higher ſhare of merit.

peculiar

peculiar delicacy are ſuppoſed to derive their origin from the power of invention, may here be introduced with the greateſt propriety. Accordingly in the ſtandards of the epopœa the moſt delicate expreſſions of parental tenderneſs *, of filial gratitude †, of inviolable friendſhip ‡, and of conjugal felicity §, are every where to be met with. Thoſe moral reflections on human life, which tend to ſoften and mend the human heart, are cloathed in ſuch ſtriking colours as to make a laſting impreſſion on the memory ‖; and the events perpetually varying, pour upon a contemplative mind a ſeries of ſuch inſtructive obſervations, as

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* ΙΛΙΑΔ. ζ. l. 466. ΟΔΥΣ. π. paſſ.

† ΟΔΥΣ. ubi ſup. Æneid. lib. ii. l. 707.

‡ ΙΛΙΑΔ. ζ. l. 120, &c. ϑ. l. 93. κ. 242, &c. Æneid, lib. v. l. 294.

§ ΙΛΙΑΔ. ubi ſup. ΟΔΥΣ. ψ. paſſ. Æneid. 2. 711. 738, &c.

‖ How beautiful in this kind is the following image in Glaucus addreſs to Diomed,

Οιη περ Φυλλων γενεη, τοιηδε και ανδρων.
Φυλλα τα μεν τ' ανεμος χαμαδις χεει, αλλα δε ϑ' υλη
Τηλεθοωσα φυει. εαρος δ' επιγιγνεται ωρη.
Ως ανδρων γενεη, η μεν φυει, η δ' απολλυει. ΙΛΙΑΔ. ζ.

render

render this work when properly conducted not leſs uſeful than entertaining.

3. Of imagination, as employed in the invention of *human* characters, ſo much hath been ſaid that it would be ſuperflous to inſiſt on this branch of the ſubject at any length. It muſt however be acknowledged that the mythology of the ancients gave advantages to the epic bard in drawing the characters of his *celeſtial* perſonages, of which he is in a great meaſure deprived by that more perfect ſyſtem of revealed religion, whoſe laws permit not imagination to blend oppoſite qualities together in ſuch a manner as to form pictureſque and original repreſentations. Homer appears to have availed himſelf of all the benefits derived from the religion of his country: and by an happy intermixture of the qualites of the divine with the frailties of the human nature, has rendered his deities by far the moſt beautiful and entertaining perſonages of his fable *. By theſe

* Our incomparable Milton has choſen a plan of all others beſt calculated to ſupply the defect ariſing neceſſarily

theſe means he poſſeſſeth the peculiar advantage of painting many original characters without violating the rules of *poetic* probability. This benefit aroſe from the practice of the ancient poets, who (as no ſyſtem of revelation took place) were left at liberty to invent ſuch a plan as imagination preſented at random; and ſucceeding bards, provided they did not overthrow the ſyſtem of their predeceſſors, might employ their divinities in ſuch actions as diſplayed in their full extent that union of diverſified qualities which fancy had aſſigned them. In order to render this repreſentation complete, as an imitation of characters, the gentler and more

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ſarily here from the nature of our religion. His devils however, give by no means that inchanting variety to the Paradiſe Loſt, which the heathen deities give to the works of Homer and Virgil. Theſe laſt blend promiſcuouſly the virtues, the weakneſſes, and even the vices of human nature in the character of their divinities; whereas Milton, in painting his celeſtial combatants, was confined to the firſt; in deſcribing their adverſaries, to the laſt mentioned qualities, but was nowhere at liberty to unite both, in ſuch a manner as forms that imitation which the *human* mind delights to contemplate.

amiable

amiable female qualities are blended even with the foibles and weakneſſes of that ſex among the goddeſſes, who act a principal part in the work. Thus, as the ſcene varies to heaven, earth, or hell, whoſe powers are all intereſted in the cataſtrophe, attention is kept always upon the ſtretch by contemplating objects perpetually diverſified, and the ſubject admits by theſe means an extent and compaſs of invention ſuperior in every reſpect to that which is diſplayed in any other branch of the art.

2. While the imagination thus has ſcope in the epopœa to diſplay all its exuberance and verſatility, a ſphere equally extenſive is opened to the underſtanding which is required to operate as univerſally, and with an energy proportioned to the former.

This truth will be rendered ſufficiently obvious, if we obſerve, that the preſervation of the unities in the epic fable, the adjuſtment of its parts to each other in ſuch a manner as to form upon the whole a proportioned as well as diverſified ſeries of objects; its incidents judiciouſly adapted to excite, but never to fatigue attention;

tion; and its epiſodes conſidered as connected with the ultimate aim of the work, and interwoven in ſuch a manner as to ſet off the principal figures to the greateſt advantage; theſe are ends eſſential to the very exiſtence of this high ſpecies of compoſition, and it muſt be immediately obvious that each is acquired by ſome exertion of the underſtanding.

Judgment therefore is here required to be at the ſame time ſedulous and unembarraſſed; clear and comprehenſive: ſedulous, becauſe the cloſeſt attention is neceſſary to give every member of the work its due proportion and conſiſtence; unembaraſſed, that amidſt the diverſity of materials, the mind may ſelect with eaſe ſuch upon occaſion as are fitted juſtly to its purpoſe; clear, that every character may be uniformly diſcriminated, and that every illuſtration may correſpond to its object; and comprehenſive, that it may be equal to purpoſes ſo widely different, and effectuate each with the ſame maſtery and correctneſs. An artiſt who follows out a ſimple plan with adequate ability naturally

claims

claims our eſteem and approbation; but we beſtow a much larger ſhare of both on him who brings grace and proportion out of an exhauſtleſs variety of materials; who ſhapes into form, a figure conſiſting of the moſt complicated ingredients, and with a ſagacity attentive to the minuteſt circumſtance, renders every movement ſubſervient to the ultimate purpoſe of his work.

As judgment therefore may diſplay its extent and comprehenſion in the external machinery and mechaniſm of the epopœa, ſo it may diſcover true philoſophical preciſion in the diſcuſſion of thoſe queſtions, whether moral or political, that take their riſe from the characters, events, and tranſactions of the work. Arguments will here be ſtated and enforced, objections will be propoſed and refuted, expedients ſuited to the manners of the perſons, and calculated to ſhew the points in which theſe laſt are diſcriminated will be fixed upon as the detail becomes complex and intereſting; and doctrines of the moſt extenſive utility, with regard to the conduct of life, may be either

either formally unfolded, be ornamented with imagery, or be inculcated as the morals of ſome beautiful allegories, as time and circumſtances require theſe to be treated. It was undoubtedly in conſequence of his having taken this enlarged view of epic poetry, as affording exerciſe to the underſtanding, that the eloquent and judicious Roman poet pronounceth Homer to have excelled the moſt diſtinguiſhed philoſophers, even in their own ſphere.

Trojani belli ſcriptorem — relegi —
Qui quid ſit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius & melius Chryſippo, et Crantore docet.
Horace.

A noble and appropriated eulogium, not leſs honourable to the *judgment* of the *critic* who could apply, than to the genius of *the poet* who could deſerve it.

3. Diſcernment of the moſt exquiſite kind, as reſulting from the union of the ſuperior faculties the epic poet may evince likewiſe in the higheſt degree, by varying the expreſſion of *one* quality according to

the combination in which it is placed *; by obſerving the inſtant at which the mind is ſuſceptible of almoſt any impreſſion; and beyond all other indications, by throwing out thoſe little ſtrokes of nature, imperceptible to a ſuperficial eye, which command the immediate acknowledgment of a feeling heart, not by language but by tears.

III. The two higher ſpecies of fable (the dramatic and epic) we have now conſidered particularly, as indicating a certain union of the intellectual powers, and we have endeavoured to point out, not only the general offices appropriated to theſe in the departments above mentioned, but the peculiar qualities by which each may be diſtinguiſhed. Before we conclude our obſervations on this branch of the ſubject, it may be proper to examine with the ſame view to the faculties of the mind, ſome kinds of fable, inferior indeed to the former with regard to the *variety* of *talents*

* See ſect. iii.

required

required for their production, but demanding an high degree of ſuch as are indiſpenſably neceſſary for this purpoſe, and giving occaſion to diſplay no inconſiderable proportion of all.

Among the writers who excel in this claſs, the firſt rank will undoubtedly be aſſigned to thoſe who have attempted to follow out the wanderings of the human heart, and to delineate the firſt impreſſions made upon a ſuſceptible mind by intereſting objects, as well as the manner in which it feels when inſenſibly familiarized to their appearance. An author who is capable of exhibiting with propriety a character of this kind, who adapts circumſtances to the affections which he propoſeth to excite, and paints theſe ſo happily when excited, as to imitate nature in her moſt delicate ſignatures, poſſeſſeth an high ſhare of philoſophical excellence, and ſhows that exquiſite ſenſibility as exiſting in his own mind, which he pourtrays ſo juſtly in that of another. Here indeed the imagination diſplays no ſublimity, or exuberance, as the characters are not of that

exalted caſt which require theſe to be exerted: but that inſtantaneous perception of certain attitudes, which diſcernment ultimately derives from imagination, that correſpondence of which every man is ſenſible betwixt the action and the feeling giving riſe to it in one heart, and excited by it in another; theſe circumſtances denominate taſte in the moſt eminent degree, and that deep inſight into human nature, which experience may indeed improve, but cannot poſſibly confer.

In this kind of fable Mariveaux, Crebillon, and we may add, our late ingenious countryman Sterne, in his Sentimental Journey, excel all other writers whatever, and their excellence (diſplayed in one ſphere only) is altogether peculiar and inimitable. The Marianne of the firſt mentioned author is a character truly exquiſite in its kind, in which however, unleſs the reader feels the ſentiments themſelves, it is impoſſible to adduce examples. A heart fluttering alternately with love and vanity, touched with the lighteſt trifles, burſting with paſſion, melting with tenderneſs,

actuated

actuated by impreſſions purely feminine, and having the nobleſt qualities ſhaded by a few foibles which render her ſtill more the object of affection; this is the portrait here preſented to us, and it is drawn in ſuch a manner as that the hand of a maſter appears in the execution. In that beautiful piece of Crebillon, where the waverings of a young heart unacquainted with the nature of its own ſenſations are touched with the niceſt diſcernment, the reader of taſte, for to him only theſe works are addreſſed, will find the conduct of a man thrown into life, with ſuſceptible paſſions, and a ſmall ſhare of experience, as happily expoſed as the female character of the former. The merit of the Engliſh writer, in the work we have referred to, lies in his happy talent of exciting the tendereſt and moſt affecting ſenſations from the moſt trifling occurrences. With no uncommon depth or compaſs of underſtanding, this author is diſtinguiſhed by a copious imagination, and an eminent proportion of the qualities of the heart. His diſcernment, therefore, which as a

philoſopher is neither extenſive nor accurate, yet as a moral painter is exquiſite, and, when employed in its proper ſphere, never fails to hit upon ſtrokes of nature the moſt expreſſive, and upon motives of powerful and irreſiſtible energy.

A more moderate ſhare of all the qualities above-mentioned is diſplayed upon ſome occaſions in the invention of fables, by which a variety of familiar characters are exhibited either in new and well adapted circumſtances, or with ordinary qualities, in ſuch combination as render the whole in ſome degree original. The former of theſe ends is obtained when the mind is agreeably led through a ſeries of incidents, happily calculated to throw light upon the principal character, and tending to ſhow it in every ſeparate point of view;—the latter, when its oddity is of ſuch a kind as to render it uncommon without being falſe or unnatural *. Examples

* Was I upon this occaſion to characteriſe our two moſt celebrated modern noveliſts, I would venture to aſcribe the firſt kind of merit to Richardſon, and the laſt

amples of both kinds the reader of curioſity will meet with in the Gil Blas of Le Sage, the Tom Jones and Amelia of

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laſt to Fielding. The Clariſſa of the former is in no reſpect original. She appears adorned with an aſſemblage of virtues, and of intellectual endowments, which it is to be hoped we ſhall frequently meet with; only in order to have the force of an *example*, theſe are raiſed conſiderably beyond the common level. Conſidering this then as the author's intention, nothing can be more admirably concerted than the incidents by which every diſtinct excellence is called ſucceſſively into action. Firmneſs, vigilance, circumſpection, united with all the gentler and more amiable female qualities, appear in the *trial*; while reſignation, fortitude, forgiveneſs of injuries, and all the virtues of the chriſtian, are nobly exemplified in the *cataſtrophe*.—The *Adams* of Fielding on the contrary, ſtrikes us wholly in the light of an original, ariſing not like that of Falſtaff or Don Quixote, from extraordinary qualities exerted in a manner wholly new and ſurpriſing; but from a combination of ſuch as are indeed more common, but marked with *one defect* that throws an air of ridicule and oddity on the whole. This defect is a total want of the knowledge of mankind. The incidents of the piece are fewer, and the plan leſs complicated than that either of Clariſſa, or even of the ſubſequent productions of Fielding:—but the character is marked with *little ſtrokes* which render it *truly comic*, and there is ſcarce a ſingle inſtance in the whole work, in which the originality either ceaſeth to appear when it ought to be conſpicuous, or is carried beyond nature.

Fielding, the Roderic Random of Smollett, and a few other Engliſh novels which appear to ſtand in the ſame rank of excellence. If we meet not in theſe with thoſe exquiſite ſtrokes of nature and paſſion which characteriſe the former, the defect is, however, abundantly compenſated by characters well ſupported, and happily diſcriminated; by incidents ſuch as we ſee conſtantly falling out, but connected ſo as to form a rational entertainment, in which probability is ſeldom violated; by a faithful picture of human life in all its diverſified appearances; and by a knowledge of mankind, which to ſome readers may in a great meaſure ſupply the loſs of a limited acquaintance, and a defective education.

It will immediately be perceived that a large proportion of the intellectual powers is required to produce a maſterly performance in this branch of Compoſition. Perhaps, however, upon the whole, judgment is diſplayed in it more conſpicuouſly than imagination. The invention of incidents (in which the laſt of theſe is principally

cipally employed here) is by no means characteriſtical, as we have already ſeen, of the moſt eminent degree of this faculty. The judgment which rangeth theſe ſo juſtly as to employ the different perſons in ſuch ſpheres of action as are beſt calculated to ſhow their *peculiar qualities* to advantage, muſt be uncommonly comprehenſive and accurate. The Adams of Fielding would have appeared to no advantage had he been wholly converſant with perſons in very low life, or with ſuch as were entirely on a level with himſelf. But the lady, the waiting maid, the hoſts, the 'ſquires, the parſons, and the juſtices, with whom he is alternately and moſt judiciouſly contraſted, contribute ſeparately to finiſh the character, until the figure is ſet before us completely proportioned.

Penetration likewiſe, as employed to develope the ſecret motives from which the actions of men derive their origin, the ingenious novelliſt will diſplay to great advantage in the artful arrangement of his incidents; in the ſtrokes that mark his characters; in the judicious ſelection of

ſuch

ſuch topics as make the moſt laſting impreſſion on the heart; and in contraſting the perſons of his fable in ſuch a manner as may moſt happily expoſe vice, detect hypocriſy, and render preſumption, affectation, or arrogance, the objects of ridicule.

We ſhall conclude this branch of the ſubject by obſerving, that Rouſſeau and Richardſon have carried this ſpecies of fable to its utmoſt perfection. Theſe writers have the peculiar merit of having introduced into a love-tale, calculated one ſhould think principally to give the mind a little tranſient entertainment, all the graces of captivating eloquence, and the noble maxims of a ſublime philoſophy. No branch of the moral character hath been left unexplored by theſe excellent authors, in whoſe writings (particularly in thoſe of the laſt) the entertainment derived from narration is ſo juſtly blended with the improvement acquired from convincing and perſpicuous deduction, that we are at a loſs to determine which of theſe ends is moſt effectually promoted.

There

There never perhaps, was a female character more highly finiſhed than the Eloiſa of Rouſſeau, which is in all reſpects more particular and appropriated than either the Clariſſa or Grandiſon of Richardſon. It is, indeed, a perfect picture of nature, finiſhed with the moſt exquiſite taſte, and in which not even the ſlighteſt and moſt delicate ſhading is deficient. We alternately admire, in this inchanting portrait, an happy mixture of tenderneſs and ſenſibility, love and reſolution, enthuſiaſm and reaſon, virtue and weakneſs, with a capacity of receiving and of communicating the moſt voluptuous ſenſations, which ſhow us all together that height of excellence of which this ſpecies of Compoſition is naturally ſuſceptible.

If, however, the Engliſh writer is inferior to his rival in this invention of character, an impartial reader will allow him perhaps the advantage in the number and variety of his incidents, the preciſion and compaſs of his philoſophy, the ſtrength and pathos of his eloquence. In this laſt quality perhaps no writer ever excelled

him

him of whom we are treating. The eloquence of Rouſſeau is ſometimes ſublime and elevating *; often deeply pathetic †; on many occaſions rich, luxurious, and inchanting ‡. But the power of *harrowing up* the ſoul with woe and horror; of cleaving the heart with pity and anguiſh; of diſſolving the mind in that ſublime melancholy which exalted genius can alone either feel or communicate;—theſe ſeem to be the provinces of Richardſon, in which he is wholly original and inimitable.

We have been particularly attentive to diſplay that union of intellectual powers which is neceſſary to perfection in the ſpecies of fable here conſidered, as our remarks on this ſubject may be of ſome uſe

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* See particularly his noble addreſs to the Atlantic Ocean, upon which he was going to launch with Anſon.

† His letter from the rocks of Meillerai, is wholly in this ſtrain.

‡ The letter ſuppoſed to have been written in Eloiſa's cloſet before the moment of enjoyment, and that ſucceeding the full accompliſhment of his deſires, are full of this luxurious deſcription.

to authors of this denomination; and I do not remember to have ſeen any regular attempt made to lay open the principles upon which a branch of Compoſition ſo univerſally popular, and ſuſceptible of ſuch high improvement, ought to be conducted.

IV. Having now conſidered the various combinations of the mental powers, with regard to the other ſpecies of Compoſition, it is only further neceſſary that we ſhould obſerve the degree of influence which theſe exert in the ſphere of criticiſm.

This noble art when viewed as extending univerſally to all branches of learning, and to every ſpecies of Compoſition, will be found to give exerciſe in ſo many ways to the faculties of the mind, that a detail of their various combinations in every art and ſcience to which the rules of criticiſm are applied, would carry us into unneceſſary length, without effectuating any purpoſe that may not be obtained by taking a more general view of the ſubject. Conſidering therefore criticiſm as exerciſing univerſal dominion over the two great em-

pires

pires of art and ſcience, we ſhall endeavour to ſhow what compaſs of intellectual powers is required to conſtitute the general character of maſtery in this art; and in what degrees the great objects abovementioned require theſe powers to be exerted.

1. It requires but ſuperficial acquaintance with this ſubject to make us ſenſible that a *great and ſublime imagination* is by no means neceſſary to form a maſterly critic. A man poſſeſſed of this talent in a very high degree, will not only be apt, without conſtant circumſpection, to permit its dictates too frequently to influence deciſions with which it is no way connected, but (as a late ingenious critic obſerves very juſtly of Longinus) he will be always aſpiring rather to *imitate* the beauties of his original, than to point theſe out with that appropriated character which taſte united with judgment will ſeldom err in conferring. The two laſt qualities ought therefore to be conſidered as peculiarly and eſſentially requiſite to critical excellence. The firſt in its *greateſt extent* does by no means

means abſolutely diſqualify a man for occupying this ſphere:—in a *moderate* proportion, as the parent of *taſte*, it is wholly indiſpenſable.

That power which we denominate Taſte in criticiſm (as far as the arts are concerned) is diſcernment corrected by judgment *in the uſe*, as it is guided by imagination in the *original perception* of its objects. It will be obſerved that we make uſe here of the term *perception* rather than that of *ſelection* or *choice*, which ariſeth, as we ſhall ſee afterwards, from another cauſe.

1. That imagination only is employed in the original perception of the objects of criticiſm, will be obvious, if we reflect by what power of the mind it is that a man becomes immediately ſenſible of certain exquiſite beauties, or perhaps material defects in the fine arts, wholly imperceptible to a common obſerver. That it cannot be judgment which directs us in this matter is unqueſtionably evident from this ſingle circumſtance, that even where a very ſuperior degree of this faculty takes place, we often

often find the perſons poſſeſſed of it not only unable to diſcover objects of this kind themſelves, but to reliſh theſe in any meaſure when pointed out to them by others. A kind of *artificial taſte* (if I may uſe that expreſſion) is indeed formed among ſuch men by application and experience; but it generally goes no further than to render them judges of external ſymmetry and proportion. The rough outlines of a figure, or the conformity which a work bears to certain general laws eſtabliſhed either by reaſon, or derived from habit, will attract the attention of ſuch critics very ſtrongly, and as the underſtanding when thoroughly acquainted with a ſubject, and uninfluenced by any other power, ſeldom errs in its deciſions, a judgment will be formed of theſe objects with great accuracy and preciſion. But of the effect ariſing from a certain happy expreſſion in the execution; of a figure as rendered not merely proportioned, but intenſely animated by an aſſemblage of well adapted circumſtances; of one exquiſite ſtroke, contrary perhaps to common rules, and to be

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contemplated wholly as an object of admiration, which preſents a form immediately to the eye with peculiar and inimitable beauty; of theſe a faculty accuſtomed wholly to cloſe inveſtigation takes no cognizance itſelf, and is apt to regard as ſport and trifling what it is unable to comprehend.—In ſhort, judges (as they may affect to be ſtyled) of Compoſition who are directed wholly by the underſtanding, will form an eſtimate in many inſtances equally inadequate as that of the mathematician I have ſomewhere read of, who peruſed the Æneid with maps of the countries mentioned in that work, and admired the author only as an excellent geographer.

As the perception therefore of the objects of Criticiſm in the arts depends not upon judgment, it muſt neceſſarily ariſe from ſome other power of the mind; and this it is obvious can only be that power which being the parent of theſe in the artiſt, can alone take cogniſance of them in the perſon who ſurveys his performance.—"Imagination (as an elegant critic "obſerveth) dwells upon an agreeable ob-

" ject with delight, arrays it in the moſt
" beautiful colours, and becomes ena-
" moured of its own creation. Taſte
" catching the contagion from fancy, con-
" templates the favourite object with equal
" tranſport, by which means it acquires
" and improves its ſenſibility: it be-
" comes more ſuſceptible of pleaſure, and
" more exquiſitely acute in its ſenſa-
" tions *."

In order however to accompliſh theſe purpoſes, we are not to judge (as was formerly obſerved) that an *eminent* ſhare of imagination is indiſpenſably requiſite. In fact, however ſtrange the remark may appear, it is yet certain that Taſte (when the mind is employed not in judging, but in execution,) is often found to be moſt defective in thoſe authors who are allowed to poſſeſs a ſuperior ſhare of that faculty from which it is more immediately derived. Shakeſpeare and Young, among our own writers, and Dante and Arioſto among thoſe of a foreign nation, afford

* See Duff's Eſſay on Original Genius, ſect. iv. p. 67.

ſuch

ſuch pregnant examples of the truth of this obſervation, as renders any further illuſtration of it unneceſſary. It is not our intention to inſinuate that theſe authors were really deſtitute of Taſte, as it enables a man to reliſh the moſt exquiſite beauties, and to judge with the utmoſt preciſion and accuracy of the productions of others. It will appear perhaps upon examination, that men of this ſuperior order are often deficient in *execution* themſelves, when they are yet capable of deciding, with a diſcernment rarely to be met with, of the conformity betwixt a general ſtandard and particular modes of imitation.

We have already ſeen the invariable connection that takes place betwixt imagination and feeling, or ſenſibility. In proportion to the degree in which the one takes place, will be always the poignancy and edge of the other. In eſtimating the general merit, or even in being impreſſed by particular beauties or defects in the work of another, it is obvious that this ſenſibility muſt be leſs exquiſite, and conſequently the mind more cool and diſpaſ-

ſionate, than when its powers are intenſely animated by the fervor with which this faculty in its greateſt vigour contemplates the object of its more immediate reſearch. In the firſt caſe, the mind poſſeſſing the power upon which the perception of theſe objects depends, can examine them at leiſure, and can judge of them either by the general laws of Compoſition, by their tendency to promote a particular purpoſe, or by that train of intermediate ideas with which theſe ought to ſtand in connection. But the caſe is altogether different in this laſt ſituation. A ſtrong imagination, wholly engroſſed by the greatneſs of its conceptions, becomes inattentive to ſuch cirſtances as appear to be inferior, and dwelling with tranſport upon ſome favourite idea, is rendered incapable of producing uniformity and proportion on the whole. Taſte in this caſe becomes vitiated by the exuberance of that power to which it owes its origin, and thus the ſame faculty that invents the theory, appears unequal to the taſk of carrying its principles into execution.

From

From theſe obſervations it is, we preſume, ſufficiently obvious that a moderate portion of imagination is only requiſite for accompliſhing the purpoſes to which Criticiſm (in the arts) is rendered ſubſervient. Diſcernment in this caſe, if it does not enter ſo deeply upon ſome occaſions into the nature of a ſubject as in the other, is yet truer, more conſiſtent, and leſs apt to be miſled in its eſtimations by whim and ſingularity.

In order however, to accompliſh the purpoſes above-mentioned, it is neceſſary that critical penetration ſhould be invariably corrected by judgment *in the uſe* of thoſe objects whoſe perception depends upon the power of invention *. The man of mere fancy, whatever ſhare of it he may poſſeſs, will always err, not indeed in the diſcovery of objects, but in the ſe-

* "Nos quid in quaqua re ſequendum cavendumque ſit, docebimus (ſays an admired ancient) ut ad ea *judicium* dirigatur. Præcipuum igitur, ne quod effici non poteſt aggrediamur: ut contraria vitemus, & communia: ne quid in eloquendo corruptum obſcurumque ſit, referatur oportet ad ſenſus qui non docentur." Quintil. de Inſtit. Orat. lib. vi. cap. 6.

lection of ſuch as are moſt proper upon particular occaſions, in that juſt arrangement of inferior parts which renders a whole proportioned and conſiſtent, and in that judicious application of examples by whoſe uſe a theory ought to be illuſtrated *.

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* In the noble work of Longinus, whoſe vivid imagination and exquiſite taſte were not always regulated by the dictates of an unbiaſſed underſtanding, we meet in ſome inſtances, with ſuch trivial criticiſm as the ſpirit in which other parts of that performance is conducted, would by no means lead us to expect. Thus he at one time cenſures Herodotus, and at another Theopompus, for little inaccuracies which a writer of ſuch ſuperior diſcernment ought perhaps to have overlooked. The former of theſe in deſcribing a tempeſt ſays, Τȣς ϖερι το ναυαγιον βραττομενους εξεδεχετο τελος AXAPI. Thoſe who ſuffered ſhip-wreck had an unhappy exit. This word AXAPI (unhappy) the critic cenſures as not equal to the greatneſs of the calamity. He is no doubt in the right. But where a deſcription is otherwiſe ſublime (as Longinus acknowledgeth this to be) and wrought up with even divine magnificence, is it worth while for a man capable himſelf of imitating the ſublimity whoſe original he developes with ſuch unqueſtioned diſcernment, to cull out a circumſtance ſo comparatively inſignificant? This is rather in the ſpirit of Anaxarchus, or Bentley, than in that of an author whoſe work otherwiſe evinceth that

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The attainment of this laſt end requires more immediately a conſtant and ſtrenuous exertion

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He is himſelf the great ſublime he draws. Pope. We may here obſerve tranſiently, that an epithet may ſometimes have impropriety when referred to ſome particular circumſtance in a complicated deſcription, whoſe beauty is yet ſuch upon the whole, that no reader of taſte would chooſe its poſition to be altered, or would ſubſtitute another in its room. In that ſublime deſcription of the tempeſt, in which Æneas had ſuffered ſo greatly, the bard repreſents Neptune as rouzed at laſt by the war of elements, and ariſing to calm the agitated ocean.

Interea magno miſceri murmure pontum
Emiſſamque hyemem ſenſit Neptunus, &c.

Every reader of the leaſt ſenſibility muſt be ſtruck with the majeſty of his deportment.

—— *graviter commotus*, & alto
Proſpiciens, ſumma *placidum caput* extulit unda. Æn. i.

A critic, however, might no doubt, find ſome incongruity betwixt the idea ſuggeſted by "*placidum caput*" which repreſents his countenance as *ſerene*, and that implied in the words "*graviter commotus*" which ſhow him to have been agitated by anger.—But does not a criticiſm of this kind rather give pain than pleaſure to an ingenuous mind, by ſhowing that all human excellence is comparative and imperfect?—Would any reader of taſte diſplace here the word "*placidum*" ſo characteriſtical of that *ſerene majeſty* in the midſt of *univerſal uproar* which *ought* to diſtinguiſh the monarch of the ocean, on account of this little impropriety? Unqueſtionably not.—But let us return to Longinus.—

exertion of the underſtanding. Some general idea may be obtained by any man of

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Our ingenious critic after having cenſured Herodotus, falls next upon Theopompus. He tranſcribes at length a paſſage from that hiſtorian, where he mentions the preſents that were offered to the king of Perſia upon his conqueſt of Egypt. He is offended with this enumeration, becauſe inſtead of riſing from leſſer objects to greater, Theopompus cloſeth his account with deſcribing what he calls "the furniture of a kitchen."—Cauſſin, a writer of ſome ingenuity, has condemned Longinus ſeverely for this cenſure, and Bayle, in his lively manner, approves of his animadverſions.—"Longinus (ſays Cauſſin) is flat here and "ſevere to no purpoſe. It was the buſineſs of a faithful hiſtorian, to take notice of the reſpect that was "paid to the king of Perſia by the meaner claſs of "his ſubjects; and if Longinus has taken ſuch an "averſion to bacon, why (ſays our critic) does he not "fall out with his defied Homer, who deſcribes with "ſo much ſimplicity the cookery of his princes." Cauſſ. de Eloq. ſacr. & human. lib. i. c. 20. This laſt hint Bayle looks upon as a home puſh, and gives up Longinus as inexcuſable. See his Dict. Critique, &c. art. THEOPOMPUS. But with ſubmiſſion to both theſe gentlemen, there is more plauſibility than truth in this reaſoning. Our excellent critic's principal quarrel with the hiſtorian here, is not ſo much with his account of the laſt mentioned circumſtances, as with its being miſplaced. Εκ των υψηλοτερων επι τα ταπεινοτερα αποδιδρασκει δεον ποιησασθαι την αυξησιν εμπαλιν,

of tolerable imagination, of beauty or deformity, incongruity or proportion in one object, and examples may be applied with

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εμπαλιν, &c. Περι Υψ. τμημ. μγ. "He ſinks (ſays he) from great to ignoble objects, againſt the known rule of conducting a climax." Longinus is certainly right in this judgment. But the caſe of Homer is no way parallel. When his princes are employed in cookery no ſuch *climax* is attempted. Magnificent objects are not, as in the detail of Theopompus, blended heterogeneouſly with ſuch as are comparatively mean and ſordid:—all is uniformly ſimple and natural. In order to render Homer as culpable as Theopompus is here, Cauſſin ought to produce ſome paſſage from the Iliad or Odyſſey, in which the poet ſums up ſome detail of magnificent preſents, with an account of freſh and ſalted proviſions. The fault therefore here is not that the critic is too ſevere, but that his example is unappropriated. Longinus had cenſured Herodotus in two paſſages quoted from that author, for ſpoiling a deſcription otherwiſe ſublime, not by introducing an improper circumſtance, but by making uſe of an ill-adapted expreſſion. He quotes the above mentioned paſſage from Theopompus, as containing an error of the ſame kind. But the fault attributed to the former is not conſpicuous here. The words in this laſt example are ſuited with ſufficient propriety to the ſubject. In the firſt, one unlucky epithet deſtroys the effect of a noble deſcription. One therefore is a little inadvertency in the ſhading of the piece; the other indicates a defect of judgment, or at leaſt of taſte, in the painter.

ſufficient

ſufficient perſpicuity to render this idea clear and even forcible. A houſe for inſtance, a tree, or a river, may be deſcribed with much propriety by a poet; and the critic may with propriety likewiſe ſelect this deſcription to exemplify ſome obſervation on deſcriptive beauty in the art. But in all this proceſs though both are exempted from cenſure, neither do we conſider the former as diſplaying any eminent ſhare of imagination, nor the latter, in his application of it to a certain purpoſe, uncommon ſagacity and reach of underſtanding. It is when the ſubject becomes complicated in one caſe by the happy intermixture of various objects reflecting mutual light upon each other (the morning ray for inſtance trembling on the bough, glimmering through the caſement, or illuminating the plumage of the little tribes that ſport on the undulating wave); in the other, when ſome peculiarly happy imitation ariſing from this aſſemblage is inſtantly perceived, and *the cauſe* aſſigned from which its ſignificance and impreſſion ultimately ariſe;—it is in theſe caſes that

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the genius of the painter appears in the moſt animated light, and the ſagacity of the critic in its utmoſt perfection. When the mind, on the contrary, forms only geral theories, or even catcheth the idea of *poſſible* excellence, without being thus *particular* in the application of examples, we either conſider the judgment of the critic as ſuperficial, or are embarraſſed by an unintereſting and unappropriated detail.

The truth of theſe remarks will be rendered ſtill more conſpicuous, when we apply what hath been here advanced to the faculties of the mind.—Man, conſidered as a being whoſe actions derive their origin from the combined influence of various principles, would ſurely be deſcribed in a very inadequate manner by that moraliſt who ſhould trace (with whatever accuracy) only one intellectual power, or one paſſion through its effects on human life; when we know that the ſimpleſt character exhibits an aſſemblage greatly diverſified of both. As the philoſopher therefore diſcovers the ſtrength and compaſs of his own underſtanding by that preciſion with which

which he explores the influence of this power on paſſions that obſtruct its operation, ſo the critic in the ſame manner diſcovers true ſagacity in his profeſſion who obſerves in what the excellence of this diſquiſition conſiſts, and adapts an example thus complicated to the illuſtration of his own hypotheſis. The paſſions in this laſt inſtance, like the external objects of which our ſenſes take cogniſance mentioned in the former, may be contemplated ſeparately without much difficulty, and the effect of each on human character may be pointed out with unexceptionable accuracy, by a man whoſe philoſophical merit is inconſiderable. But in both caſes, we can have no ſurer proof that the judgment of a critic poſſeſſeth depth and ſolidity, than when we find his obſervations confirmed by examples in which the beauty is not general, or referred to one object; but ariſeth from a diverſified, though natural combination. Diſcernment is here ſeen to be guided by imagination in the perception of objects whoſe uſe is preſcribed by the underſtanding.

II. Criticiſm, when conſidered more particularly with regard to ſcientifical reſearch, will render ſtill more conſpicuous our obſervations on thoſe important offices which are exerciſed in this province by the reaſoning faculty. In philoſophy we have already ſeen, that as judgment directs the author in the choice of his ſubject, in the method of conducting it, and in the juſt proportion of its parts to each other *, ſo it is judgment likewiſe by which the critic is enabled to form an adequate eſtimate of the execution. That exquiſite diſcernment, ſo neceſſary in *the arts* where imagination perceives ſuch objects as reaſon enables us to put to their proper uſe, is not eſſentially requiſite to characteriſe the philoſophical critic, becauſe the theory of which he is to judge, having been formed originally by the underſtanding, its inventor; fancy can have no extenſive influence in con-

* Το γαρ ψευδος εν Συνθεσι αει· ενδεχεται δε και διαιρεσιν φαναι παντα. Το δε "ΕΝ ποιουν τυτο ΟΝΟΥΣ εκαστου. ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. περι Ψυχ. βιβ. Γ. κεφ. Ε.

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ducting its examination. That we may have a clear view of this ſubject, it will be proper to enquire what the critic in the preſent caſe is principally required to have in view.

The general plan of a philoſophical work is then only complete (as we have already ſhewn) when it is diſtinct, connected, and comprehenſive of the ſubject *. A writer who obtains theſe points is properly nominated judicious, becauſe it is unqueſtionably by an effort of the underſtanding that materials are arranged in ſuch a manner as to form a whole that is proportioned and conſiſtent. Even the *invention* of theſe in this ſcience we have ſhewn to ariſe from the ſame faculty, and we have diſtinguiſhed by particular criteria this kind of invention from that which is either derived from another power of the mind, or from the union of both. An excellence or defect in

* ΔΙΑΘΕΣΙΣ (ſays the great philoſopher quoted above) λεγεται του εχουλος μερη ταξις, η κατα τοπον, η καλα δυναμιν, η κατα ειδος. Θεσιν γαρ δει τινα ειναι ωσπερ και το ονομα δηλοι η Διαθεσις. ΜΕΤΑΦΥΣ. βιϐ. Δ. κεφ. ιθ.

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this diſcovery or diſpoſition falling under the cogniſance of an intelligent judge, will give him occaſion to ſhow that good ſenſe (as it is called), that power of thinking with juſtneſs and preciſion, which ſo univerſally denominates the prevalence of reaſon. It is true indeed that a man of *diſcernment*, in the proper ſenſe of that word, may diſplay this quality to great advantage in ſuch a diſquiſition; but it is equally certain that a deciſion perfectly accurate, and founded on the juſteſt principles, may be pronounced on the invention and diſpoſition of materials in a philoſophical enquiry by a perſon whoſe powers of imagination are inadequate to thoſe of his underſtanding.

When again we come to weigh the comparative ſtrength of arguments, as carrying conviction to the mind, we muſt be immediately ſenſible that it is the *reaſon* of mankind only to which the philoſopher here appeals, and it is *reaſon* only by whoſe aid the truth or fallacy of theſe arguments can be detected by the critic, who judgeth of his work. Penetration, as obſerving this fallacy immediately, though concealed

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by the moſt plauſible repreſentation, will render him qualified to enter with eaſe, as well as depth and compaſs into his ſubject; but reaſon alone, without this quick and almoſt intuitive perception, by its ſteady attention and gradual procedure, obtains its end at laſt as ſurely, though not perhaps ſo quickly as the former; and by inveſtigating cloſely every circumſtance of its detail, lays before the mind a view of the whole reſearch conceived with comprehenſion, and expreſſed with perſpicacity.

Here I am aware that a very natural and important queſtion will ariſe. Since (it will be ſaid) the underſtanding alone is adequate to ſo many purpoſes in this dignified ſphere of compoſition, what is meant by that *philoſophical diſcernment*, which a maſterly critic is ſaid to diſcover in this noble and inſtructive ſcience, and how are *its* objects to be diſtinguiſhed from ſuch as are contemplated ſolely by the faculty of reaſon? This queſtion is very proper, and in anſwer to it we muſt in general obſerve, that the degree of diſcernment (ſuch

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as hath already been delineated) which is diſplayed in philoſophical criticiſm depends principally upon the conduct of the work which it is propoſed to inveſtigate. The critical art is in this reſpect diſſimilar to others, that though referred ultimately indeed to nature and truth as its ſtandards, yet more immediately it relates to ſome work in which theſe are imitated or developed. In an examination therefore thus conducted, it is obvious that the combination of powers appearing to predominate in the mind of the critic muſt be of the ſame kind, though not perhaps equal in degree with that which characteriſeth the writer whoſe work is examined. Thus we ſhall naturally be induced to judge of the former as poſſeſſing certain intellectual qualities from the choice which he makes of his ſubject, and with a preposſeſſion thus far juſtly eſtabliſhed, we ſhall conſider the execution of his performance. Reaſon, we have already ſeen, takes cogniſance of the propriety and connection of arguments as ſtanding together in a natural arrangement: diſcernment

(conſiſting of the union of this faculty with that of invention) directs in this ſphere in what manner theſe may be moſt powerfully illuſtrated, and diſcovers the beſt means of enforcing each with energy and ſtrength. This laſt quality therefore will always appear to the greateſt advantage in philoſophy, when the work criticiſed contains excellencies ariſing from the ſuperior powers ſometimes making a diſtinct and ſometimes an united exertion, in which caſes the critic may ſhow his penetration in a very ſtriking point of view, by tracing each kind to its original ſource; and by following out the operation of either or both faculties ſo accurately as to diſcover his own knowledge of the human mind, and to enlarge that of his reader.

Here it is eaſy to obſerve that the underſtanding, however enlarged and comprehenſive, can be adequate only to a few of thoſe purpoſes which it is neceſſary to accompliſh, becauſe beauties derived from *an union* of intellectual powers in the author which ſubſiſts not in the mind of him who attempts to judge of his work, muſt either

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be deemed equal to one important branch of his ſubject, when his diſcernment of others is faulty and deficient. Still however we are to remember, that as the ſphere aſſigned to imagination is more limited in this than in any other ſpecies of Compoſition, a man poſſeſſing ſtrength and ſolidity of judgment may employ the critical art in philoſophy, with emolument to his readers, when the examination of other ſubjects requiring a more complicated intermixture of mental qualities might be juſtly chargeable with abſurdity and inconſiſtence.

Hiſtory, when regarded as a mirror in which the mind is faithfully reflected, and the real characters of men tried by the ſureſt of all teſts, that of their conduct in diverſified occurrences gives ſcope to the diſcernment of a genuine critic, as much at leaſt as any literary department whatever. There are indeed a kind of drudges who pretend to appropriate this province to themſelves, whoſe labours diſcover critical acumen in the ſame manner as a waggon-horſe jingling his bells ſhows the ardour

and impetuoſity of the hunter; and who, though uſeful in a certain ſphere, are as much diſqualified for others, as the former looſed from his machine would be to take the hedge or gate at a leap in purſuit of the greyhound. Among theſe we may include the whole tribe of verbal and chronological critics, the latter of whom in particular diſplay learning and application, and even the former, upon ſome occaſions, ingenuity in their conjectures; but neither of theſe can apply the received opinions of what conſtitutes excellence or defect in the hiſtorical profeſſion ſo juſtly to the work they are examining as to evince their own knowledge of the human heart, and thus render hiſtory ſubſervient to its moſt important purpoſe, that of inſtructing mankind by example.

We would not be underſtood here to detract from the real merit of authors, whoſe induſtry has been of uſe to ſuch readers as deſire to have every tranſaction recorded in hiſtory as clearly elucidated as poſſible. But without incurring this cenſure, we may ſurely obſerve that he who traceth

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actions with accuracy up to their original cauſes, however remote and apparently incompatible with their effects; who detects for inſtance jealouſy, envy, pride, avarice, or ambition in the characters of men, beneath the ſhading by which theſe are often ſcreened from vulgar cogniſance; who, with regard to intellectual endowments, ſhows what conduct was directed by judgment, what by caprice, what by paſſion, and what by clear and comprehenſive recollection in the perſons of whom he treats; we may obſerve that this author obtains the ultimate purpoſe of his profeſſion effectually; and that the critic who diſtinguiſheth the inſtances in which theſe are ſucceſsfully or unhappily delineated, differs as widely from the moſt exact chronologer as he who promotes the edification of mankind does from him who miniſters wholly to their curioſity. A penetrating judge of human nature has an opportunity here of ſhowing his diſcernment in a very eminent manner *, either by

* "Paulatim ad majora tendere incipit hiſtoricus,

by correcting the errors of the hiſtorian when he appears to have miſtaken his ſubject by entering into a cloſe and particular examination of the objects falling under this writer's inſpection; or by ſupplying his defects where the end of hiſtory may not have been fully obtained, by collecting either from one fact, or from a ſeries of tranſactions, remarks which render us acquainted familiarly with the perſonages of hiſtory, and able to explore with philoſophical preciſion the cauſes of the riſe, extenſion, and diſſolution of empire.

Upon the whole therefore, when we conſider the critic as required in ſome branches of his profeſſion to diſtinguiſh faults from real beauties amidſt a group of indiſcriminate objects; to obſerve the delicate and almoſt imperceptible ſhades by which theſe approach to, and almoſt unite with each other; to be able in others to

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laudare claros viros, & vituperare improbos, quod non ſimplicis utilitatis eſt opus. Namque & ingenium exercitum multiplici variaque materia, & animus contemplatione recti pravique formatus & multa inde cognitio rerum venit." Quintil. lib. ii. c. 4.

inveſtigate the principles of an art with the accuracy of a philoſopher, at the ſame time that the order and proportion of inferior parts is attentively marked; the cauſes pointed which have given riſe to uncommon deviations in one inſtance, and cuſtomary ones in another; and particular paſſages referred to either by way of proof or example, in whoſe choice as well as diſpoſition the mind perceives peculiar propriety; theſe, it muſt be allowed, are offices in which various degrees of merit are rendered conſpicuous, and are calculated when taken together to ſhow us completely that combined influence of judgment and imagination which conſtitutes diſcernment in its utmoſt extent.

Thus in the proſecution of this curious and delicate ſubject we have endeavoured to trace that union of the intellectual powers, which gives riſe to philoſophy, hiſtory, poetry, fables, and criticiſm, and to aſcertain likewiſe, as nearly as poſſible, that influence which each of theſe ſeparately conſidered requires theſe to exert. Eloquence (in the preſent point of view)

differs in nothing materially from the higher ſpecies of dramatic poetry, and, as a branch of the moſt eſſential importance in the art of which we treat, it will fall afterwards under examination. It will be obſerved in general, that there is a difference betwixt the ſimple conſideration of the cauſes that produce certain effects, and that of the various manners in which each requires theſe cauſes to operate. In the former point of view they have been already conſidered; in the latter they belong to a ſubſequent ſection.

SECTION VIII.

Whether that ballance of the intellectual powers from which the perfection of Compoſition reſults, can be obtained; and by what methods we may make the neareſt approach to it.

FROM the preceding ſeries of obſervation on the powers of the mind, as variouſly employed in the art of Compoſition, it is we preſume evident, that the real

real faults, as well as inequalities which we meet with ſo frequently in works of unqueſtionable eminence, ariſe in moſt inſtances rather from that diſproportion which takes place betwixt one faculty and another, than from the poſitive weakneſs of any particular quality, as we are apt to think upon ſuperficial inſpection. It will therefore be univerſally acknowledged that a mind which had received from nature a propenſity to Compoſition, and in which the powers, whoſe functions we have attempted to determine, are conferred in the higheſt degree, and are ballanced with perfect equality, would attain the utmoſt excellence in this art of which human nature is ſuſceptible. Without enquiring whether a mind participating all theſe advantages ever exiſted (a ſubject foreign to the purpoſe) it will be worth while to conſider the more obvious cauſes by which this equipoiſe of the powers abovementioned is obſtructed; and to ſum up our view of Compoſition, as it regards the faculties of the mind by laying down

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ſuch rules as may tend at leaſt in ſome meaſure to ſupply this defect.

I. Amidſt that great diſproportion of mental abilities, which the ſlighteſt obſervation will ſhow us to take place among men, we ſhall find that nature, like a wiſe and impartial governor, has been careful to preſerve a kind of equality in the whole ſpecies, by annexing particular faults or imperfections almoſt inſeparably to the poſſeſſion of ſuch qualities as have the greateſt tendency to render an individual the peculiar object of admiration and envy. Thus judgment, however exact and comprehenſive, when not accompanied by imagination is cold and unanimated: its arguments convince, without amuſing or exhilarating the mind; and we are apt to judge the trouble we have had in peruſing its reſearches but poorly compenſated by the inſtruction which theſe may have ultimately conveyed to us. The philoſopher therefore, with all the pride of ſcience, and of ſuperior abilities, finds himſelf neglected becauſe he is diſqualified

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to blend entertainment with utility, and thus diſcovers that he is really inferior in one important circumſtance, to thoſe whom in other articles he might juſtly regard as unable to riſe to his ſphere of excellence.

As the poſſeſſion of judgment without an adequate proportion of imagination is thus naturally accompanied with ſome inconveniencies, as we ſhall find much greater diſadvantages almoſt inſeparably united with vigour, and much more with exuberance of the laſt mentioned faculty. Where a man's paſſions are ſtrong, his feelings exquiſite, and his mind ſuſceptible alternately of almoſt every impreſſion, it is obvious that his manners muſt be characterized by marks of inequality, which bring him down upon many occaſions to the common level of his kind *, and fully com-

* As there is no queſtion ſo clear but ſome philoſophers have ſtudied to perplex, we find the ſame bad conſequences aſcribed ſometimes to reaſon itſelf, or at leaſt deduced from the weakneſs which are here derived from the prevalence of a licentious imagination, and the Deity impeached for having conferred it.

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compenſate for ſuch other qualifications as place him in a diſtant and exalted region *.

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" Eam dediſſes hominibus rationem quæ vitia culpamque excluderet. Ubi igitur locus fuit errori Deorum? Nam patrimonium ſpe bene tradendi relinquimus; qua poſſumus falli. Deus falli qui potuit?—Si homines rationem bono concilio a Diis immortalibus datam in fraudem malitiamque convertunt non dare illam quam dari humano generi melius fuit, &c." Cicer. de Natur. Deor. c. 31. With regard to the preſent ſubject we need only obſerve in anſwer to theſe objections, (which Cicero has put in the mouth of Cotta) that reaſon, though at many times it is ſubdued by the paſſions, yet in conſequence of its obtaining in many other inſtances the victory over theſe, and giving conſiſtence to the character, is the power by whoſe influence we act with ſteadineſs and recollection: while fancy on the other hand, as impelling the paſſions, and acted upon by theſe is the cauſe, in the ſame manner of inequality and inconſiſtence. The one therefore only deviates ſometimes from its purpoſe from the imperfection of human nature, whereas the other (unleſs when reſtrained within proper limits) does ſo at every time without exception.

* Men of genius have exhibited but too many examples of the truth of this remark. The author of the life of the celebrated Pallavicini, has very properly illuſtrated it from the conduct of that gentleman. His words are remarkable. " Coſi è pur vano che non ſi trovi in queſta vita mortale coſa alcuna intieramente compita; & avenga ſovente, che quelli, che poſſiedono migliore ingegno degli altri huomini rieſcano nelli

proprie

In life therefore, conſidered as properly regulated by prudence, ſteadineſs, and equability, as well as in the art of Compoſition, the point of perfection lies in the equipoiſe of theſe faculties acting with harmony, and extending their conſequences to every part of the character. In proportion likewiſe, as the meaſure in which theſe are conferred becomes nearer to, or more remote from this equality, will be the excellence or imperfection of that conduct or production on which the intellectual powers are required to exert united influence.

Uncommon however as an union of this kind is, we ſhall find, upon reflection, that a near approach to perfection at leaſt, if not the abſolute attainment of it, is in a great degree obſtructed by a defective and injudicious ſyſtem of education. In order thoroughly to comprehend this matter, let us conſider a little the firſt train of ideas that are impreſſed upon the mind with re-

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proprie attioni, con ſcandalo de' ſemplici peggiori de gli altri huomini." Opere di Pallavicin. vol. i. p. 10.

gard

gard to the ſubject of this eſſay, and let us examine the effect of which theſe ideas muſt naturally be productive, ſuppoſing nature to have laid a foundation ſufficient for bringing both the ſuperior faculties to operate with uniform and almoſt perfect concurrence.

1. It is acknowledged on all hands that in the firſt ſtages of life, the inventive power appears much earlier, and arrives at maturity more ſpeedily, than that which obtains its purpoſe by the proceſs of intermediate argument *. A young perſon therefore entering into life with as much of both qualities as the human mind can be judged to poſſeſs, will diſplay the former in great luxuriance before the latter

* Quintilian includes Imagination under the name of Memory, which he mentions as the firſt indication of genius. "Ingenii ſignum (ſays he) in pueris præcipuum Memoria eſt. Ejus duplex virtus: facile percipere, & fideliter continere." When he mentions quickneſs of perception as characteriſtical of memory, he obviouſly includes under this deſignation one province of the power of invention which is employed, as we have already ſhewn, in the original perception of the objects of criticiſm. Inſtit. lib. i. c. 3.

has

has arrived at its ſtrength and conſiſtence *. This proceſs is perfectly natural, and ſuited to the firſt notions we form of intellectual exertion. The external beauties of creation form the firſt, and perhaps the higheſt entertainment of an ingenious and ſenſible mind †. Fancy having theſe at firſt impreſſed upon it by the ſenſes dwells for ſome time with pleaſure

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* To this faculty, as the parent of ambition, we muſt refer the indications which the conſummate judge of human nature above referred to mentions as diſcovering genius; "Mihi ille detur puer quem laus excitet, quem gloria juvet, qui victus fleat. Hic erat alendus ambitu, &c." Ibid. "Excitabitur laude æmulatio. Nam licet ipſe vitium ſit ambitio, cauſa tamen virtutum eſt." Cap. 2.

† "Repreſentons-nous donc la naiſſance de la muſique & de la poeſie en quelque belle contrée parmi des hommes heureux & innocens. Imaginons-nous d'abord des bergers qui conduiſoient leurs troupeaux des le matin dans les plaines fleuries le long des paiſibles rivieres. Pendant le jour ils les retiroient a l'ombre des bois, & des collines. A ces heures-la jouiſſant du repos on des grottes fraiſches, ſous l'epaiſſeur des arbres, ils entendoient le chant des oiſeaux, & ils furent imperceptiblement excitez a imiter ces fredons & ce doux ramage." De la Poeſ. et Peint. par M. Geneſt. ap. Div. Trait. ſur l'Elog. & Poeſ. vol. ii. p. 280.

upon

upon the original, and where the mind receives a propenſity to Compoſition, proceeds either to copy theſe itſelf, or delights in the peruſal of ſuch productions as contain the moſt perfect models of imitation. In theſe circumſtances it is obvious, that imagination gaining perpetual acceſſions of ſtrength by exerciſe, while the reaſoning power gains no degree of proportioned improvement, muſt become at laſt ſo excentric and irregular as to overpower the other in the ſucceeding periods of life, and perhaps to prevent its growth, in the ſame manner as a ſtem permitted to ſhoot beyond its proper dimenſions, or to bear too luxuriant a crop, debilitates the whole trunk, and renders its other productions ſcanty and deficient.

It is therefore upon the firſt plan of education that is purſued with a mind in which nature has infuſed the ingredients of genius, that its future character may be ſaid to depend. Yet do we attend ſufficiently to the culture of its ſuperior faculties at a time when ſo many obvious

obvious advantages may be derived from this attention? A courſe, I am afraid, tending naturally and unavoidably to *break* the ballance of the mental powers is taken by far the greater number of mankind. The parent or the tutor who obſerves in a child the firſt emanations of genius (ſhould he chooſe to encourage its propenſities) attempts to ſtrengthen his deſire of knowledge, and to ſtimulate his early inclination to ſtudy by putting, we ſhall ſuppoſe, into his hands books of innocent and agreeable entertainment. This conduct is ſurely thus far proper and judicious. Curioſity, the firſt paſſion that appears in the character, is by theſe means powerfully excited; and a partiality of the greateſt conſequence in every future period is eſtabliſhed in favour of particular ſpecies of Compoſition.

The caſe however varies very conſiderably when the mind comes nearer to a ſtate of maturity. Imagination, never ſatiated with entertainment, and, where it is conferred in an high degree, running con-

ſtantly into extremes, acquires, by indulgence in its irregular excurſions, a certain wildneſs and faulty exuberance, which reaſon is afterwards employed to correct to very little purpoſe. When the laſt likewiſe is either originally very unequal, or by being neglected in the firſt ſtages of life has comparatively received but a ſmall ſhare of improvement:—in this caſe quibble, antitheſis, and little conceits, which diſcover falſe taſte, but are apt to ſtrike upon fancy in its age of inexperience and error, will be marked with eagerneſs, transfuſed into the firſt eſſays of opening genius, and a habit of deviating into bad compoſition will be eſtabliſhed at that period, when every habit of this kind is apt to make the moſt laſting, and therefore the moſt dangerous impreſſions.

Yet what is the method uſually employed to cultivate a propenſity to this art when it is firſt perceived to take place?—If thoſe performances which tend to *pollute* the imagination are with-held, ſuch as contribute to *extend* it by the ſwifteſt progreſſion are ſupplied with liberal indulgence.

gence. Plays, fables, poetic compoſitions of the deſcriptive kind, and perhaps the extravagant fictions of romance, are devoured with inſatiable avidity. Memory is loaded with a multitude of undigeſted incidents; and taſte is by theſe means often incurably vitiated, when it ought to be formed upon a model the moſt accurate and correct.

It will perhaps be ſaid in anſwer to theſe remarks, that as the growth of reaſon is comparatively ſlow, and its progreſs to maturity almoſt imperceptible, it muſt be difficult, if not impoſſible, to bring this power to the ſame perfection at which the inventive faculty arrives at any early ſeaſon of life; and that as ſoon as it becomes capable to follow out the thread of argumentation, it is cultivated (in thoſe at leaſt who receive an academical education) by being applied to the ſtudy of philoſophy. But this inſtead of clearing up the matter, renders ſtill more inexcuſable the conduct of thoſe perſons who in place of attempting to ſtrengthen the weaker power, add force to that which is originally predo-

minant.—Let us ſee how this reaſoning would hold when applied to the common occurrences of life.—A father we ſhall ſuppoſe has two ſons, the one with a ſtrong and healthy, the other with a feeble and delicate conſtitution. It is indiſpenſably neceſſary that by athletic exerciſes, perhaps by hardy culture, and by the uſe of all the methods uſually employed to render the body robuſt and vigorous, the latter of theſe ſhould, if poſſible, be made as able to ſupport fatigue and to combat difficulty as the former. Would he judge it an expedient proper to be uſed, if any man ſhould ſuggeſt ſuch a method, to ſtrengthen by every means the firm and durable conſtitution, and leave that which ſtood in need of the greateſt aſſiſtance upon the precarious hope that nature might at laſt make an effort in its favour? Or granting both to be originally equal in ſtrength, but one of them advancing in ſtature and intellect much faſter than the other, would he deem it rational to overlook him who required the moſt aſſiduous attention in order to preſerve the original

equality,

equality, and beſtow this wholly on the other, whoſe progreſs to maturity might indeed be quicker, but by no means ſurer than that of the former, properly directed?—In circumſtances of this nature no man is at a loſs to judge of the moſt reaſonable means, and to know the method that is moſt eligible whether he purſues it or not.—Whence then, it may be aſked, ariſeth the difference betwixt the expedients made uſe of in ſimilar caſes to ſtrengthen the body, and thoſe that are applied to invigorate the faculties of the mind?—The cauſe is obvious. In the firſt mentioned caſe, reaſon receives immediate and convincing evidence from the ſenſes: in the laſt, without any information by this canal, the mind is left to form a theory for itſelf. As men therefore in general are by no means qualified for abſtracted ſpeculation, individuals are governed by the eſtabliſhed cuſtoms of the world; and thus one intellectual power is permitted to acquire almoſt unlimited dominion before an attempt is made to im-

prove the other by a regulated plan of education.

Upon the hypotheſis here laid down, a diſcerning reader might find it perhaps no very difficult matter to trace thoſe aſtoniſhing inequalities which are to be met with in performances of the higheſt eminence to their original ſource, at leaſt in many inſtances. It appears to me unaccountable upon any other principles, in what manner authors who at one time ſhine in the ſphere of ſuperior excellence, at another ſink into the moſt puerile levities. Intellectual operation when directed by judgment, is uniform and conſiſtent. A man who eſtimates with preciſion and propriety the comparative value of great objects upon one occaſion, will (if his taſte is not vitiated by prepoſſeſſions acquired before his reaſon came to maturity) diſplay the ſame perſpicacity in judging of ſuch as are of leſs importance at another. But receiving a particular bias to ſome ſpecies of falſe Compoſition, in the ſame manner as a man, otherwiſe of good principles,

ciples, gains the habit of indulging a particular paſſion, his judgment is unable to reſtrain this propenſity in the future periods of his life, and he ſees the defect in others, without being equal to the taſk of correcting it in himſelf.

2. Thus far we have proceeded upon the ſuppoſition that imagination is originally prevalent in the mind; and we have ſhewn in what manner a wrong plan of education tends to ſtrengthen the bad conſequences of which this diſparity is naturally productive. It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that when reaſon happens to preſide eminently over the other powers, theſe conſequences are not likely to fall out, at leaſt in the firſt and earlieſt ſeaſon of life; and in order therefore to preſerve an inequality betwixt the two ruling faculties, thoſe propenſities, which in the former inſtance are to be moderated in the latter, may be indulged with ſome degree of freedom.

It is natural for every man who poſſeſſeth the leaſt ſpark of genius, to turn his thoughts at firſt upon works of fancy

and invention. A deſire of this kind in a man whoſe underſtanding is ſolid and comprehenſive, but his powers of invention greatly inferior, ought to meet with encouragement, unleſs it ſhould be carried obviouſly to an extreme, which will rarely be the caſe. Such a purſuit tends to invigorate and to extend as much as poſſible, a faculty which it is neceſſary to cultivate, and whoſe original inferiority in this laſt caſe, will leave no room to dread the effects that ariſe only from its wildneſs and luxuriance. When the real character however begins to be perceived, and the *bias* of the mind determines its choice of objects, a man poſſeſſing naturally no great ſhare of imagination is in hazard of cruſhing it altogether, by giving way to that courſe of ſtudy in which perhaps he is principally fitted to excel. At this time he begins to fix all his attention upon the acquiſition of ſolid and edifying knowledge as it may be deemed, and in the purſuit of this, neglecting that exterior poliſh, and thoſe beauties which are eſſentially neceſſary to render this knowledge

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ſubſervient to any valuable purpoſe, he becomes aſſimilated to writers who ought by no means to be regarded as ſtandards of imitation; and ſees, perhaps when too late, others ſucceſsfully employed in a province which his own inattention has diſqualified him to occupy.

But theſe, however material, are not the only conſequences which neceſſarily ariſe from neglecting to improve the inventive faculty when it is originally inferior to the underſtanding. We have already ſhown in what manner diſcernment is conſtituted by the union of both, and what qualities it derives particularly from a vigorous imagination *. Theſe as they muſt neceſſarily lie dormant, or be even annihilated in the mind, when that power upon which they depend remains uncultivated, will leave a deficiency ſo obvious as not to be compenſated by the poſſeſſion of reaſon alone in any extent we can aſſign to it. A reader deſtitute himſelf of this penetration will obſerve perhaps

* Sect. iv. p. 92.

only

only that a work is cold and wholly unintereſting, even when the arguments are clear and convincing in the caſe we have ſtated, without tracing exactly this defect to its original. But he who is qualified to judge of its influence on the minds of others, from that which it exerts on his own, will miſs in ſuch a performance thoſe happy illuſtrations which render arguments forcible as well as perſpicuous; and will obſerve in what inſtances theſe might have been ſtrongly impreſſed upon the mind, by having fixed upon a few deciſive criteria, inſtead of having entered into a minute and tedious detail, from which he ariſeth in ſome meaſure diſguſted.

It is with the art of Compoſition in this caſe, as with all other ſubjects of what kind ſoever. Extreme indulgence in any propenſion (eſpecially in the firſt part of life) will always have the moſt pernicious tendency. We obſerve the effects of ſcholaſtic education, even in that work which immortalizeth the genius of Milton, as the philoſophical diſquiſition into which Pope was led (probably by the contempt

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he had for deſcriptive poetry) appears to have curbed the exertions of a genius otherwiſe inventive, ſublime, and diverſified *. Young, on the other hand, ſeems to have impaired his reaſoning powers, or at leaſt to have prevented their full exerciſe, by a conduct altogether oppoſite. His moral obſervations are often excellent; his language is highly ornamented, and he riſes often to a wonderful pitch of ſublimity. But his judgment, in ſome parts of his writings, would ſeem to be equal to taſks †, in the execution of which we find it after all to be deficient. By having formed himſelf at firſt upon falſe models, his taſte appears to have ſuffered conſider-

* This obſervation (if I am not miſtaken) is ſomewhere made in an ingenious Eſſay on the Writings and Genius of Pope. He uſed to call deſcriptive poetry as abſurd a compoſition as a feaſt made up of ſauces. Eſſ. p. 51. This ſurely was not the reſult of that impartial reflection which preſerves a juſt medium in its deciſions; and had not Pope's imagination been uncommonly luxuriant, an adherence to this opinion would have rendered his compoſition ſpiritleſs and proſaic.

† In the conduct of ſome of his tragedies for inſtance, and in his Univerſal Paſſion.

ably,

ably, and his reaſoning, when cloſely examined, is commonly lame and diſſatisfactory *. In ſhort, he is an excellent painter, but a bad philoſopher. His looſe remarks are frequently juſt and ſtriking; but his arguments want ſtrength and propriety.

II. As we have thus endeavoured at ſome length to inveſtigate the cauſes ariſing from our own conduct, by which the equipoiſe of the intellectual powers is principally obſtructed, it is only further neceſſary to enquire by what methods theſe may be moſt effectually removed, and the mind fitted by nature to excel in Compoſition be qualified to approach as near as poſſible to perfection in the art.

Every man of reflection will acknowledge that the ſtep requiſite to the attain-

* "C'eſt une conſolation pour un eſprit auſſi borné que le mien d'etre bien perſuadé que les plus grandes hommes ſe trompent comme le vulgaire." Volt. It is making a proper uſe of ſuch failings in a great genius to conſider theſe as evidences of that *equality* which obtains upon the whole among mankind, as we have formerly obſerved, whether in this particular inſtance here adduced we have juſtly aſſigned the cauſe of theſe or not.

ment

ment of this important end, muſt be taken by detecting *the particular bias of the mind*, to whatever objects it may be ſuppoſed originally to point. This, among the variety of human characters, is in ſome ſituations perfectly eaſy, and in others a work requiring the greateſt attention, and no ſmall ſhare of diſcernment. In every caſe, however, without exception, where any propenſity to the art of which we treat takes place in the mind, a penetrating judge will diſcover it in the firſt rude eſſays, which may be properly denominated the ſimple effuſions of the heart. In theſe circumſtances, by comparing two draughts on the ſame ſubject (the execution perhaps of a taſk) by a young perſon endowed with this diſpoſition, and by another, at the ſame time of life, who is wholly diveſted of it, or who poſſeſſeth it in a very inconſiderable degree, he will obſerve an obvious difference either in ſtrength and propriety of epithet, comparative regularity of parts, or an eaſy flow of expreſſion. The attempt of the latter (if the ſentiments and diction are not borrowed,

rowed, with little or no alteration, from the firſt book he can meet with on the ſubject) will be ſtiff, affected, and the viſible reſult of application and labour. It might perhaps be deemed chimerical to affirm, that it could be poſſible to diſcover in any art but that of poetry, the particular branch of Compoſition to which the mind hath received a bias. The mental powers muſt be allowed to open at leiſure in ordinary caſes, before we can pronounce with certainty upon the courſe which theſe may be preſumed moſt probably to purſue. It ought however to be obſerved, that we ſhall find ourſelves much miſtaken if we ſuppoſe a genius for Compoſition to be indicated at this time of life merely by an inclination to reading and ſtudy. This diſpoſition, though it is indeed an inſeparable concomitant of the talent we have mentioned, is by no means an indication that it actually ſubſiſts.—Though no man ever poſſeſſed the former of theſe without the latter, yet we meet with innumerable inſtances of men who can peruſe with pleaſure the writings of others,

others, and are yet unable to execute with grace and maſtery themſelves. It is therefore, only by an attempt to execute that the exiſtence of this uncommon qualification can be properly aſcertained *.

Perhaps in very early life, when a young perſon begins to diſcover ſome degree of genius, but in ſuch a manner as that it may be impoſſible to eſtimate the comparative ſtrength and proportion of his faculties, nothing can produce an happier effect on the mind, than little tales inculcating an obvious moral, conducted in the

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* Διο και την Ομηρου ϖοιησιν (ſays an ancient moraliſt with great propriety on the ſubject of fable) και τους ϖρωτους ευροντας τραγωδιαν αξιον θαυμαζειν· οτι κατιδοντες την Φυσιν των ανθρωπων, αμφοτεραις ταις ιδεαις ταυταις κατεχρησαντο ϖρος την ϖοιησιν. Ο μεν γαρ τυς αγωνας και τυς ϖολεμους των ημιθεων εμυθολογησεν· οι δε τυς μυθυς εις αγωνας και ϖραξεις κατεσησαν· ωσε μη μονον ακουσους ημιν, αλλα και θεατους γεγενησθαι. From theſe remarks he draws very juſtly the following concluſion (which ſhows his knowledge of human nature,) Τοιυτων ουν ϖαραδειγματων υπαρχοντων δεδειχται τοις επιθυμυσι τους ακροωμενυς ψυχαγωγειν οτι το μεν νουθετειν και συμβουλευειν αϕεκτεον. Εκεινα δε γραπτεον και λεκτεον οις ωρωσι τους οχλους χαιροντας. ΙΣΟΚ. ϖρος Νικοκ.

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ſimpleſt method, and expreſſed with the utmoſt conciſeneſs and perſpicuity. Beſides the tendency which theſe naturally have to form the heart to the love of virtue, the young reader will find his ideas clear and unembarraſſed in the purſuit of ſo ſimple and eaſy a detail, at the ſame time that his deſire to imitate will be greatly encouraged by having a pattern ſet before him which he can copy without difficulty. By theſe means likewiſe an early reliſh is acquired for genuine and natural beauty:—the mind, before it has obtained a ſufficient degree of diſcernment to ſeparate falſe from real excellence, will inſenſibly imbibe a prepoſſeſſion in favour of the laſt; and its powers will gradually be called out into exerciſe as it contemplates pictures of human life approved upon reflection, and ſuited to thoſe ideas which on the firſt view of things are ſo naturally and unavoidably ſuggeſted.

As we have already ſeen that fancy makes its appearance ſooner, and ſhoots into more vigorous exertion than the faculty of underſtanding, it will no doubt be

be proper, that in thoſe compoſitions which are firſt peruſed by young perſons there ſhould be ſomething calculated to amuſe and ſoothe imagination. This end may be gained by a very ſimple train of incidents. In a ſhort and plain allegory the moral appears ſo obviouſly as to make an impreſſion on the judgment and the memory even though this is almoſt imperceptible and involuntary. When the fable becomes more various and complicated, imagination is either bewildered in the labyrinth of conjecture, and its firſt conceptions are obſcure and intricate; or it is apt to dwell upon ſuch circumſtances as are moſt wonderful and remote from its original ideas. In either of theſe caſes the work of inſtruction is at an end. He therefore, who would form the mind to excellence in the ſphere of Compoſition, and would preſerve as nearly as poſſible the balance of its principal powers, ought to take particular care that its earlieſt notions be clear, appropriated, and fully comprehended. That compaſs of ideas which it is fitted to take in ought to be

marked with the utmoſt accuracy; and every ſucceſſive object to be illuſtrated in ſuch a manner as that it may be accuſtomed to canvaſs ſubjects with attention, and to expreſs its ſentiments with eaſe and perſpicuity. This ſtrain of gradual and progreſſive education reſembles, methinks, rural life in places diſtant from the noiſe of cities. All is ſeemingly calm and ſtill. To the eye in the early ſeaſon of ſpring, but few traces of induſtry and labour are conſpicuous. But in the mean time the buds are inſenſibly expanding with their fruit; the ſun is exerting more powerful influence; the herbage is imperceptibly advancing to maturity, and the buſineſs of the field is going on.

When we follow the mind in its progreſſive ſtate, as a more improved and open organization gives it a larger ſphere of exertion, we are no longer at a loſs to diſcover its prevailing bias, and to determine the particular ſphere of its exerciſe. In this ſituation, a man of diſcernment will endeavour to follow the lead of nature as cloſely as poſſible, without attempting to

effectuate

effectuate too much at once. It muſt be obvious for inſtance, that to engage a young perſon of lively imagination at once in abſtracted and metaphyſical reſearches; or to confine another, whoſe coolneſs and ſagacity might fit him for theſe laſt, wholly to the reading of novels and poetry, would be a method totally irrational, from which no good conſequence could reſult. Inſtead of ſtrengthening the faculty of reaſon in one caſe, or that of invention in the other, ſuch conduct could anſwer no other purpoſe than that of producing languor and inattention, if not diſguſt and ſatiety in both. Reflection will therefore ſuggeſt to us that by continuing to grant the power that is prevalent ſome degree of indulgence, while at the ſame time we engage the perſon in whom an inequality is perceived in purſuits whoſe *principal* tendency is to cultivate that which is weaker, we ſhall moſt probably obtain the end at which we propoſe to arrive by a well-conducted proceſs of education. In order to exemplify this general theory, let us

conſider each of theſe caſes a little more particularly.

In a preceding part of this work * we have endeavoured to point out the marks by which we may aſcertain the predominance of imagination. Suppoſing then theſe indications to obtain ſo ſenſibly in any one inſtance as that the mind may be apt to be too much influenced by this irregular faculty, perhaps no method can more effectually conduce to improve the underſtanding, than engaging the young perſon inſenſibly in the ſtudy of thoſe branches of moral philoſophy which are moſt eaſily comprehended, and by being naturally ſuſceptible of elegant illuſtration, are calculated more happily than any other ſubjects to convey inſtruction and entertainment by the ſame canal. Our own language abounds with ſo many excellent performances of this character, that the objection of being compelled to wait until we have acquired another for this end is happily ſuperſeded. The philoſophy of

* Sect. iii.

Addiſon

Addiſon in his Spectators and other periodical eſſays, is adapted in a particular manner to accompliſh this end. The many natural and elegant graces that are thrown into the proſe compoſitions of this amiable writer, the harmonious ſtructure of his periods, the variety and importance of his ſubjects, his unaffected ſimplicity, and that vein of inimitable humour which is diſplayed in his principal characters; theſe circumſtances, united with juſtneſs and propriety of ſentiment, render the philoſophy of this author fitted peculiarly to form the taſte, and improve the underſtanding of him, whom if left to his own direction, fancy and inexperience might ſeduce into error.

By the ſtudy of the beſt writers on ſubjects relating to life and manners, the mind is not only prepared by the moſt gradual progreſſion for entering into ſeverer philoſophical diſquiſition, but its thoughts will run in that channel of obſervation which is favourable to the exerciſe and to the culture of reaſon. It will by theſe means be habituated to reflect

on its own operations, and by attending to ſuch ſentiments as relate immediately to itſelf, will learn to correct propenſities, or to avoid prepoſſeſſions, whoſe conſequences on the character and conduct of others it may find particularly detailed and exemplified. As ſoon as he on whom nature hath conferred a talent for the higher branches of Compoſition, enters thoroughly into this ſeries of moral obſervation, his natural deſire of imitating the models that are ſubmitted to his cogniſance, will lead him to attempt ſomething himſelf in a ſtrain ſimilar to that which he perceives to have obtained univerſal approbation *. By every effort of this kind (dictated perhaps originally by an ambition of excelling) the underſtanding will

* This method the beſt and moſt intelligent writers recommend, as at the ſame time a teſt of genius in the art, and the beſt means of its improvement. "On ne s'exerce preſque jamais a l'eloquence par la voye la plus ordinaire & la plus ſeure qu'il y a pour y parvenir qui eſt l'exerciſe frequent de la Compoſition: a quoy il faut s'appliquer avec quelque ſorte d'aſſiduité pour en acquerir l'habitude: car rien n'eſt egal a l'avantage qu'on en reçoit." Rap. Reflex. ſur l'Eloq. p. vi.

acquire

acquire an acceſſion of ſtrength; and reaſon will learn to judge of its objects with ſuperior accuracy, compaſs, and preciſion. There is a very great difference betwixt that improvement which may be obtained by taking a remote and diſtant view of inſtructive ſubjects, though perhaps as particular as the diſtance will permit, and the benefit acquired by bringing a certain train of ideas near as it were to the mind, and by endeavouring as much as poſſible to transfuſe their ſpirit into a copy. In the firſt caſe whatever advantage is gained muſt be the reſult of leiſure and application. But in the laſt, the mind, like the eye ſurveying attentively a variegated proſpect, will follow out openings that are imperceptible at a diſtance, until it diſcovers the objects for which theſe were contrived:—imperfections in the general deſign, as well as beauties that eſcape common obſervation, will become conſpicuous:—in ſhort, new avenues of ſentiment will be gradually diſcloſed:—and the man accuſtomed to purſue a thought through all its conſequences will proceed to form

a theory for himſelf in one caſe, as he lays out an original draught of cultivation and policy in the other; indebted only to his inſtructors for the firſt general principles upon which the work is conducted.

To the peruſal of works of this nature by perſons of the character we have delineated, we may add the uſe of ſuch critical performances as tend to form a correct and elegant taſte in the different branches of the fine arts*; as well as to give exerciſe to the underſtanding by accuſtoming it to accurate and particular inveſtigation. The ſelection of various examples by which a theory is illuſtrated in theſe productions, will agreeably amuſe the imagination of a young genius, and emulation will be excited in favour of ſuch beauties as the writer finds it moſt eaſy

* I mean here that kind of criticiſm (to adopt the language of an eminent writer) "quæ auctores cum cæteris ſcriptoribus qui eadem tractant comparat; ut per hujuſmodi cenſuram ſtudioſi & de librorum delectu moneantur, & ad ipſam lectionem eorum inſtructiores accedant. Atque hoc ultimum, eſt criticorum tanquam cathedra, &c." De Augment. Scientiar. lib. vi. p. 422.

to imitate *. The blemiſhes likewiſe that are to be met with even in the moſt approved ſtandards of Compoſition, appear in a much more ſtriking light when ſet in oppoſition to their excellencies in a critical examination, than when we ſurvey the work as a whole, and are inattentive to the ſource from which inaccuracies proceed, even ſuppoſing that we have obſerved theſe ſuperficially. Care however ought to be taken that the performances of this caſt that are put into the hands of inexperienced readers may neither be too philoſophical, nor ſuch as dwell upon minute and trifling imperfections. A man poſſeſſed of exuberant imagination will probably in early life be too lively and volatile to enter with attention into the diſquiſition of the former; and the latter will either cramp his genius too much by rendering him timid and diffident, or will diſcourage him altogether by producing

* "Nam creſcit cum amplitudine rerum vis ingenii (ſays an author of diſcernment) nec quiſquam illuſtrem orationem facere poteſt niſi qui cauſam parem invenit." Dial. de Cauſa Corrup. Eloq.

abſolute

abſolute deſpair of obtaining perfection in the art. Mere philoſophers, and men of mere fancy, are commonly the worſt critics imaginable. The one writing wholly from the head is only able to execute the mechaniſm of his work, and is diſqualified to apply his own rules with propriety; while the other throws out the reveries of a heated imagination without coherence, meaning, or proportion.

We muſt again have recourſe to the laſt mentioned amiable writer, as one of the fitteſt in every ſenſe to form the mind in the earlieſt ſtages of human life. There is not perhaps in the works of any critic whatever, an happier mixture of ſound judgment, and of temperate imagination, than in the eſſays which Addiſon has left us on the ſubject of Criticiſm. His Critique on the Paradiſe Loſt (however a few ſuperficial readers, incapable to think for themſelves, and floating like feathers upon the current of opinion, may affect to deſpiſe it) diſcovers true taſte, warm ſenſibility, and an exquiſite diſcernment of poetic beauty and defect. Deeper and more

more philoſophical diſquiſition may perhaps be found than the critical works of this author preſent to us; but theſe laſt, in conſequence of their temperature in this reſpect, are particularly adapted to the period we are at preſent contemplating. I can never take up any of this admirable writer's more ſerious pieces without applying to his manner the character which Cicero gives us of the ſtyle of philoſophy.— "Mollis eſt enim oratio philoſophorum & umbratilis. Nihil iratum habet, nihil invidum, nihil atrox, nihil aſtutum, caſta, verecunda, virgo incorrupta quomodo *." Perhaps Mr. Hurd's ingenious eſſays on this ſubject, thoſe of Johnſon, and a few of the beſt French critics may be here recommended with propriety, as calculated in a particular manner to improve the judgment of a young genius, and to form his taſte to correctneſs and perſpicacity. He will be taught by theſe means to think with preciſion, to decide upon ſure principles; and having once learned to diſtin-

* De Orat. lib.

guiſh

guiſh betwixt genuine beauty and that which hath only its appearance, he will acquire an early habit of imitating the one of theſe, and of avoiding the other.

Should any other courſe of reading be thought neceſſary to complete the ſyſtem of education that is proper at this period for the improvement of the underſtanding, we would venture for this purpoſe the ſtudy of natural hiſtory. A judicious performance on this copious and intereſting ſubject, hath indeed an obvious tendency to call out all the powers of the mind into ſucceſſive exertion, and is calculated beyond all others to excite and to gratify that curioſity which is ſtirred up in a reflecting mind by objects conveyed to it by the canal of ſenſation. As no theme of whatever kind, contains a more diverſified ſeries of objects than that of natural hiſtory, ſo there is not perhaps any in the proſecution of which more various degrees of merit have been rendered conſpicuous. That part of it which relates to the generation, the ſpecies, and the organization of inſects, like many other ſubjects excel-

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lent in themſelves, and tending to produce emolument to the reader, yet hath been followed out by authors whoſe hearts perhaps were better than their underſtandings, with ſo much minuteneſs as hath expoſed both themſelves and their ſubject to ridicule. The theme however in itſelf is undoubtedly noble, as it tends to enlarge our ideas of the power and wiſdom of that Being who has not only peopled the world with ſuch inexhauſtible variety, but has with wonderful attention adapted the organs of the ſmalleſt inſect to its peculiar neceſſities, and has directed the objects around to afford it a ſucceſſion of ſuitable ſupplies.

But the circumſtances after all which a man of great imagination will principally take pleaſure to contemplate, are thoſe parts of this ſcience which lay open the grandeur, the magnificence, and the utility of the works of nature. Accordingly, we find that the birth and generation of things, the formation of the earth from chaos, the original and the employments of its firſt inhabitants, the productions

tions of ſeas, rivers, mountains, &c. were the themes both of the earlieſt poets and philoſophers *, inſpired as it were by the powerful

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* This truth will be acknowledged by all who have any knowledge of antiquity. The bards of theſe early days united in their own profeſſion the character of poets and philoſophers, but theſe laſt attempted not to occupy the ſphere of the firſt. Yet their ſubjects were the ſame. Προτερον μεν εν ΠΟΙΗΜΑΣΙ εξεφερον οι ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΙ τα δογματα και τυς λογυς ωσπερ Ορφευς και Ησιοδος, ſays Plutarch on this ſubject. Linus, Orpheus, Melampus, Thamyras, Palæphatus, Pronapides, Timæus Locris, and Heſiod, authors (the two laſt excepted) ſome of whoſe writings are wholly loſt, and the others preſerved in broken fragments, all of them began their ſongs at that period.—"Cum nondum divinæ religionis, non humani officii ratio colebatur: nemo legitimas nuptias viderat: non certos quiſquam inſpexerat liberos, &c." Cicer. de Inven. but—αμα παντ' επεφυκει "all things were jumbled together:" and the formation of the univerſe from this chaos was the ſubject of their ſongs.

Principio cælum ac terras campoſque liquentes
Lucentemque globum Lunæ, Titaniaque aſtra
Spiritus intus alit: totamque infuſa per artus
Mens agitat molem. VIRG.

To this inveſtigation they gave the name of THEOGONY, which (as a learned modern writer obſerves) "is a ſyſtem of the Univerſe digeſted and wrought "into an allegory:—a compoſition made up of in-"finite parts, each of which has been a diſcovery of "itſelf,

powerful voice of nature, and led to ſurvey divine wiſdom in the workmanſhip of the Deity.

" itſelf, and is delivered as a *myſtery* to the initated." Enq. into the Life of Homer, p 99.—The philoſophers treated this ſubject more ſyſtematically, without the images and licence of poetry. The Ægyptians aſcribed the origin of things to matter or earth *; Thales the Mileſian, to water †; Plato, to the four principles, fire, water, earth, and air, put together and ſupported by an inviſible and infinite mind ‡; Lucian humorouſly, but in a ſpirit truly philoſophical, aſcribes the mixture of theſe elements to Venus, or the principle of love §; and Phornutus has explained in a very diſtinct manner the offices of every deity in the generation and conſervation of things, diſcovering by theſe means the important truths that are ſhrouded ſo effectually beneath the veil of poetic allegory ‖. As it appears, therefore, that theſe fathers of ſcience who hung out the *firſt lights* to mankind dwelt ſucceſſively upon the ſubjects here recommended, moſt of them at periods when the *human mind* with regard to knowledge was in its infancy, and ſuſceptible of any impreſſions whatever; no ſubjects more appoſite and inſtructive can be propoſed to the young and inexperienced, than thoſe which were originally judged ſo important, and which are productive of ſuch obvious emoluments.

* ΔΙΟΓΕΝ. ΛΑΕΡΤ. προοιμ. p. 7.
† Id. Θαλ. p. 18.
‡ Id. Πλατ. 229.
§ ΛΥΚΙΑΝ. Εξατ. Oper. vol. iv. edit. Baſil. p. 195.
‖ ΦΟΡΝΟΥΤ, περι των Θεων φυσ. paſſ.

When

When from contemplating in this manner the earth in general and the bodies revolving around it, we come to conſider its various ſtrata, the minerals hid in its bowels, and that inexhauſtible ſtore of materials which it contains for all the purpoſes of man; the underſtanding engages in an enquiry at the ſame time curious, entertaining, and inſtructive. It ought however to be obſerved, that a general ſketch of theſe ſubjects calculated rather to ſtimulate than to gratify curioſity, will be ſufficient in very early life to convey as much knowledge as a judicious inſtructor will judge it expedient to communicate. Nothing is productive of worſe conſequences, particularly upon young perſons of genius, than an attempt to lay before them at once the whole extent of an art, and to hurry the mind as it were before it is arrived at a ſtate of ſufficient maturity into intricate ſpeculations, whoſe evidence after all may be principally conjectural and preſumptive. That this is the caſe with thoſe who have wrote on Natural Hiſtory, is evident from the various hypo-

theſes that have been formed of the origin of rivers, fountains, and volcanos; of the cauſes that give riſe in particular inſtances to eruptions, inundations, and hurricanes, and other extraordinary phænomena of the ſame kind. The peruſal of different theories on theſe ſubjects anſwers only the purpoſe of opening an inlet to ſceptical principles; and by involving the mind in a labyrinth of doubt and error, renders it unable to range its ideas with preciſion, and to expreſs theſe with perſpicuity. The method of proceeding from the ſimpleſt views of a ſubject to more enlarged and compounded exhibitions, is exactly analogous to the manner in which we find it neceſſary to proceed when young perſons are inſtructed in the knowledge of thoſe languages which it is judged proper to teach them, (with what expediency we ſhall ſee afterwards) almoſt as ſoon as they are capable of diſtinguiſhing objects. That tutor, who, as ſoon as his pupil had learned the firſt elements of Greek and Latin, ſhould put into his hands Thucydides, Pindar, Tacitus, or Perſius, would ſurely

be cenſured as having acted in a very abſurd and irrational manner. We ſuppoſe that the man, at whatever age, who is acquiring theſe languages can for a time take in but a ſmall compaſs of ideas. We extend theſe gradually by leading him from the plaineſt and moſt intelligible writings, to ſuch as by a more complicated conſtruction of words require application and exerciſe to be thoroughly comprehended. By this proceſs the explication of difficult paſſages becomes at laſt eaſy: we grow familiar with particular idioms, and are able to transfuſe theſe into a copy: we enter without perplexity into the whole phraſeology, and are qualified to impart our knowledge to others by that method which experience hath ſhown to be ſucceſsful with ourſelves.

By beginning therefore with diſcloſing thoſe works of divine wiſdom that are conſpicuous in the formation and exerciſes of the various claſſes of inſects; by deſcribing the manner in which theſe are fitted ſo admirably for the purpoſes of their creation; their little arts, policy, government,

ſettlement,

ſettlement, and excurſions, a mind endowed with any portion of genius will engage in a moſt agreeable and inſtructive reſearch. While imagination will dwell upon the wonderful and aſtoniſhing in this enquiry, judgment will find its inveſtigation conſiderably enlarged by ſtudying the manners of theſe and the deſires by which they appear to be animated *; as well as by obſerving particularly the marks that ſerve to diſcriminate either individuals of the ſame tribe, or the different ſpecies from each other †. Its ideas of infinite wiſdom

* —— communes natos, conſortia tecta
Urbis habent, magniſque agitant ſub legibus ævum;
Et patriam ſolæ, & certos novere penates.
Venturæque hyemis memores, æſtate laborem
Experiuntur, & in medium quæſita reponunt,
Namque aliæ victu invigilant, &c.
Virg. Geor. iv. l. 153.

† The divine poet, whom we have quoted above, makes a noble uſe of the employments of theſe tribes, by making theſe inculcate ſome ſublime maxims of philoſophy.

His quidam ſignis, atque hæc exempla ſecuti,
Eſſe apibus partem divinæ mentis & hauſtus
Æthereos dixere: deum namque ire per omnes
Terraſque, tractuſque maris, cælumque profundum.

wiſdom will be inconceivably augmented, and its curioſity ſupplied with the higheſt gratification, when by advancing gradually in its enquiry it finds the whole viſible works of the Deity tending to produce the moſt beneficial purpoſes; and even thoſe in which a ſuperficial view might ſeem to

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Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,
Quemque ſibi tenues naſcentem arceſſere vitas.
Scilicet huc reddi deinde, ac reſoluta referri
Omnia: nec morti eſſe locum; ſed viva volare
Sideris in numerum, atque alto ſuccedere cœlo.

Ibid. l. 219.

The genius of Virgil ſhines no where more conſpicuouſly than when it is thus employed in conveying the moſt momentous truths to the mind from ſubjects apparently ſimple and unimportant. In this province of genius, beyond all others, it may be ſaid to deſerve the denomination of *creative*, as the author in ſome ſenſe exhibits an imitation of the divine mind by ſtriking the unexpected light of inſtruction from a theme which at the utmoſt promiſes only a little tranſient entertainment. We obſerve with admiration the compaſs and extent of that mind which could inculcate from the little labours of inſects the omnipreſence and immenſity of God, as the vital principle ſpread through the univerſe, and the immortality of the ſoul which proceeds from, and mixes at death with divine eſſence, which could inculcate theſe doctrines with propriety as growing out of its ſubject, and naturally coaleſcing with objects ſo apparently incongruous and remote!

point

point out irregularity, contrived upon cloſer examination for ends of great and obvious importance.—Thus, by following out a digeſted plan, the underſtanding will be improved by a ſure, though an almoſt imperceptible progreſſion; and the mind will acquire an habit of tracing effects to their cauſes with juſtneſs and accuracy, as ſoon as it is capable of forming an eſtimate of the comparative value of the objects that ſurround it.

Among the many works to which this copious ſubject hath given riſe in our own country, there are few calculated to anſwer all the ends which it is here propoſed to bring about. Derham, in his Phyſico-Theology, has indeed explained ſome parts of Natural Hiſtory in a very clear and ſimple manner:—but his ſtyle is unhappily ſo vulgar and unanimated, that we can ſcarce recommend his work (though otherwiſe valuable and judicious) to thoſe who ſtudy to improve the intellectual powers by whoſe influence the mind is qualified for Compoſition. Ray, Weſley, and ſome others, who have wrote on the

ſame topics lye open to ſimilar exceptions. The larger compilations on the other hand, either collected from books, or the reſult of the author's own obſervation and experience, are by far too abſtracted and philoſophical either to improve or entertain an inexperienced reader. Happily however for our preſent purpoſe, the work of an ingenious foreigner which is elegantly tranſlated into our own language, and is almoſt in every body's hands, may be recommended with confidence, as having an obvious tendency to excite, as its author intended, the curioſity, and form the mind of youth. Few readers will be at a loſs to know that the work referred to is that entitled Spectacle de la Nature, and contains a general view of the works of nature carried on in that method which we have recommended as moſt eligible in the firſt ſtages of life. The propriety therefore of recommending this work as a means to effectuate the above-mentioned purpoſes, muſt be ſo obvious as to ſtand in need of no illuſtration. We ſhall therefore only obſerve, that the familiar ſtyle of

dialogue

dialogue which the author hath adopted in the three firſt volumes, the happy ſelection of his characters, and that air of philoſophical negligence which is ſupported through the whole, give this performance advantages in point of entertainment equal, if not ſuperior, to moſt others on the ſame ſubject *.

Having thus endeavoured to lay open that ſyſtem of education which may be moſt favourable to the cultivation of *reaſon* in a mind diſtinguiſhed by the eminent predominancy of the power of invention, it will be a much eaſier taſk to aſcertain the method by which imagination may be ex-

* Though we have here principally recommended the work of a foreign writer on the ſubject of Natural Hiſtory, to the peruſal of young readers, there are ſome Engliſh writers on this ſubject whoſe works may be read for the purpoſes above ſpecified with utility. Beſides a compendious and judicious treatiſe of this kind publiſhed in the Preceptor, many of Dr. Hill's pieces are curious and edifying in this branch of literature; and even Weſley, though he appears not to have ſtudied elegance of expreſſion in his ſurvey of the works of nature, yet has taken ſuch a view of theſe as may in a great meaſure be ſubſervient to the purpoſes for which this ſtudy is here recommended.

tended when it is diſcovered to be weak and inferior in a ſtriking degree to the former. We may lay it down as a rule from which there is no exception, that where in the ſpring of human life a young perſon diſcovers no very ſtrong inclination to peruſe writings whoſe principal end is entertainment, and in which fancy appears upon the whole to be predominant, that ſuch a man poſſeſſeth a very moderate ſhare of the power of invention. This laſt, whenever it is conferred in any conſiderable meaſure, will dwell upon ſuch performances with the utmoſt ſatisfaction, and will ſingle out from a whole not merely the moſt ſtriking incidents, but ſuch as certain little circumſtances imperceptible perhaps to a common obſerver, render particularly adapted to make a ſtrong, if not a laſting impreſſion upon the mind.

This propenſity, however, to peruſe books of entertainment, is ſo univerſal among mankind in the ſeaſon of early life, that it may be thought too general a criterion to aſcertain the extent, or even the pre-

prevalence of an intellectual faculty in an individual. In order therefore, to judge of this matter properly a man of penetration will attend to the remarks, which, after reading an ingenious and entertaining work, will occur to the mind of his inexperienced ſcholar. The power of invention when obviouſly prevalent, will ſtrongly indicate its predominance by making the mind ſelect, as capital beauties or faults of a work, circumſtances that relate to incidents, colouring, machinery. The man of this caſt will dwell upon the ſcenery rather than the characters of ſuch a performance, and paſſing over the conſideration of a whole as formed of members proportioned to each other, will either be inchanted with the wild and luxuriant, or will ſelect thoſe ſtrokes, however ſeemingly inſignificant, whoſe diſcovery indicates exquiſite ſenſibility.—When theſe marks are obſerved to take place, the man may with propriety be ranked among thoſe in whoſe mind it is principally requiſite to improve the underſtanding. The prevalence of this laſt, on the contrary, will render the general

ral diſpoſition of ſuch a work the object of his attention; thoughts in whatever expreſſion theſe are clothed which ſhow either acuteneſs or comprehenſion, will impreſs the memory when the moſt ſignificant illuſtrations are no longer recollected; an impropriety in ſome train of ſentiment, or in ſome particular occurrence, will in ſuch a mind cancel a part of the improvement or pleaſure which might otherwiſe be derived from either; and the fitneſs of a particular part as juſtly ſuited to thoſe which make up a whole will be obſerved, when its beauty as an ornament will be wholly overlooked.—In this laſt caſe, therefore, the ſeaſon of youth ſhould not be permitted to paſs over, without every method being taken to extend and invigorate the powers of invention. It requires no great ſhare of attention to diſcover that theſe laſt reflections are not ſuch as will occur upon the firſt peruſal of a work to a young perſon of genius, if we ſuppoſe it to be principally characteriſed by imagination. In very early life ſuch a man will be apt to feel a *perpetual fluctuation*

tion of thought, (if we may expreſs it in this manner) a rapid ſucceſſion of new ideas crouding into the mind as his attention is called off from one object to another; and in the midſt of this internal commotion, if his thoughts are fixed by any ſeries of incidents whatever, that particular circumſtance will make the ſtrongeſt impreſſion which a glance of reflection, imperceptible perhaps at the time, recommends as that which he himſelf would have ſelected in the ſame ſituation.

So indelible however are the impreſſions which nature ſtamps upon the mind, that with regard to the preſent ſubject, in what degree ſoever we ſuppoſe a man to poſſeſs a talent for Compoſition, he will be eaſily diſtinguiſhed, even by a ſuperficial obſerver, from one who reads merely for amuſement, or even from a native propenſity to ſtudy and obſervation. The laſt of theſe as he is directed by no other motive in the reading of a work than either the entertainment he may receive from it at a vacant hour, the reputation of learning he may acquire by retailing various opinions

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on difficult and controverted ſubjects, or by the neceſſity he finds of ſupplying his own want of original ſentiment by gaining it from others, will be ſatisfied with being qualified to mark out the capital beauties of a performance, perhaps with great judgment and accuracy, but without making ſuch remarks as diſcover any deſire of imitation. The opinions therefore which theſe men form with regard to propriety of ſentiment, ſtrength of reaſoning, or the proportion ſubſiſting betwixt the inferior members of a work, may be the reſult of their own experience and attention;—but their remarks on the Compoſition (particularly of a performance in which taſte and genius are diſplayed) are uſually either retailed implicitly from the converſation of thoſe who are eſteemed the beſt judges; or will ſhow ſuch little accuracy and diſcernment in this matter as will leave a man even of moderate penetration at no loſs to pronounce that they are out of their ſphere.—We now return to the principal ſubject.

When

When, in conſequence of ſome ſuch proceſs of obſervation as we have attempted to ſuggeſt, it hath been diſcovered that a young perſon is poſſeſſed of a good underſtanding, but a very inferior ſhare of imagination; in order to extend this laſt faculty to ſome equality with the other, a tutor will ſeldom err in granting a liberal indulgence to the deſire which every man of genius feels in his earlieſt years, to peruſe works of fancy and invention; unleſs only when theſe (as is too often the caſe) have any tendency to corrupt the heart. A little reflection will thoroughly convince us, that this method of proceeding can be productive of no ſuch bad conſequences as might at firſt view be ſuppoſed to ariſe from it. The underſtanding participating in no degree of the giddineſs and volatility of fancy, arrives at maturity by a progreſſion not leſs ſure, becauſe it is commonly imperceptible; and, unleſs in ſome very extraordinary inſtances, acts not with full force until the edge and vivacity of imagination begins to ſubſide. By ſtrengthening therefore this laſt when it is very

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deficient, the other it is obvious can be in no degree impaired, becauſe in every work we ſhall not only find ſomething of which reaſon is required to take cogniſance, but when this power predominates remarkably, the mind will be naturally diſpoſed to dwell upon every object that is favourable to the improvement of its ruling faculty, rather than to take in thoſe ſublime effuſions of genius, which are calculated almoſt wholly for the meridian of taſte and ſenſibility. Thus reaſon will continue to improve in the preſent inſtance, in whatever exerciſes the mind is engaged, becauſe it will always meet with ſomething adapted to this purpoſe; whereas imagination may be cruſhed when a man is engaged in certain purſuits which afford nothing calculated to ſtrengthen or extend it.

In order therefore to bring the leading powers to a balance as nearly as poſſible, when the latter is found to be weak and diſproportioned, the perſon diſtinguiſhed by this inequality ought not only to be early accuſtomed to the peruſal of works

of

of invention, but his preceptor will perhaps find it expedient to point out to him thoſe *purely poetic beauties* which, deriving their origin almoſt wholly from imagination, are not of ſuch a kind as he who has received from nature a very moderate proportion of this faculty might ſelect for himſelf. By theſe means as fancy begins to extend by being kept in perpetual exerciſe, the mind will conceive ſuch ideas of the ſublime, the elegant, the pictureſque, as well as of the correct and harmonious, in Compoſition, as it will be a vain attempt to infuſe when the judgment is arrived at full maturity, and when taſte is no longer ſuſceptible of improvement.

We may obſerve further on this branch of our ſubject, that as the prevalence of underſtanding never fails to be indicated by a certain cool and ſedate manner which is in ſome meaſure incompatible with the impetuoſity of imagination, ſo the *paſſions* that obtain in a remarkable degree in this laſt inſtance are either wholly abſorbed in the other caſe, or at leaſt ſubſiſt in a meaſure much leſs perceptible. It will therefore

fore be expedient to wake the embers of thoſe paſſions, and to call each ſucceſſively into action, as a ſtep indiſpenſably requiſite to promote any ſtrenuous exertion of the intellectual powers. That we may fully effectuate this purpoſe, ſuch models of Compoſition as are at once approved as the beſt ſtandards of the kind, and may be imitated with *comparative facility*, ought to be laid before the mind when its faculties are come nearer to their full growth, and when the man is able to determine the ſphere in which he is particularly qualified to excel. Thus the writings of Homer or Shakeſpeare will no doubt contribute to invigorate the power of invention, in the ſame manner as the genius of Milton is ſaid to have been raiſed to that wonderful pitch of ſublimity at which it afterwards arrived by his being addicted to the reading of romance. But where no great portion of fancy is conferred by nature, a man may be brought to admire the beauties of poetic Compoſition, and even to feel their influence, while his own conſcious inferiority produceth a deſpair of imitation.

As

As ſoon therefore as his imagination is inflamed, and of conſequence his ambition excited in very early life by having ſtudied the works of a great genius, and by having his principal excellencies explained, illuſtrated, and rendered familiar; theſe works, as having anſwered their purpoſe, may be laid aſide; and the moſt approved ſtandards of philoſophical, eloquent, or hiſtorical Compoſition will ſerve, by being ſubmitted to his enquiry, to gratify that aſpiring emulation which we ſuppoſe to have been ſtimulated by his attention to the former. By this method his mind will receive that improvement which is beſt ſuited to the bias and ſtrength of its faculties *, and with his reaſon exerting the

* "A principio caveamus (ſays a great genius formerly referred to, writing on a ſubject ſimilar to the preſent) a penſis, vel magis arduis, vel magis puſillis quam res poſtulat: nam ſi *oneris nimium* imponatur, apud *ingenium mediocre* bene ſperandi alacritatem obtundes; apud ingenium fiduciæ plenum opinionem concitabis, qua plus ſibi polliceatur quam præſtare poſſit; quod ſecum trahit ſocordiam. In utroque autem ingenii temperamento experimentum expectationi non ſatisfaciat, id quod animum ſemper dejicit & confundit."

the ſame force it might have done upon a plan of education adapted wholly to cultivate the underſtanding; his imagination will acquire extent and compaſs greatly ſuperior to that which a plan of this kind could ever have produced. If he cannot therefore at any future period ſoar into the region of the ſublime and the wonderful, he will learn at leaſt to expreſs his

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De Augmen. Scient. lib. viii. p. 464. It is with much ſatisfaction that the author finds in a work of this great man, a rule laid down correſponding ſo happily to that which is preſcribed in this branch of his work. It is undoubtedly true, that a man in the middle rank of genius with a moderate ſhare of good ſenſe will be apt, in conſequence of that juſt way of thinking which accompanies this qualification, to have his hope of ſucceſs wholly depreſſed by contemplating a ſtandard greatly beyond his reach; as he, on the other hand, with the ſame qualities, who has confidence enough to attempt an imitation, will be ready to ſink into indolence when he finds his execution ſo diſproportioned to the excellence of his model. Emulation, as we formerly obſerved, may be excited by a ſtudy of this kind more powerfully perhaps than by any other; but in order to direct it properly when once ſtimulated, authors of merit, whoſe beauties may be more eaſily imitated, ought to be laid before a man of this character; whoſe mind being then unbended and eaſy will proceed in its courſe with alacrity and perſeverance.

thoughts

thoughts with vigour and energy:—if his diction is ſeldom coloured with the glow of imagery, he will however avoid the extreme of tedious and inſipid uniformity: in ſhort, by having the ſphere of his inventive power enlarged by a train of ideas paſſing conſtantly before it, in the ſame manner as a feeble conſtitution is rendered healthy by exerciſe; he may obtain the graces, though not the majeſty of Compoſition; and may become a correct and maſterly writer, though never a great and elevated genius.

III. As we have now attempted, in compliance with the deſign of this ſection, to inveſtigate the cauſes that obſtruct the equipoiſe of the mental powers as far as theſe ariſe from a defective plan of education, and to ſuggeſt ſuch expedients as may contribute moſt effectually to prevent their conſequences; it is only further neceſſary that we obviate an objection which ſome readers may make with regard to the difficulty of carrying the ſcheme we have laid down into execution; and the real or

chimerical value of its effects ſuppoſing the plan to be ſteadily purſued.

1. As to the firſt, it will no doubt occur to every man who reflects on this ſubject, that the difficulty of carrying on a proceſs of this kind, where an end of importance is to be gained, can form no reaſonable objection (eſpecially in extraordinary inſtances) againſt the attempt. In the preſent caſe, however, we ſhall find upon examination no ſuch impediments either in diſcovering the predominant faculty of the mind, or in applying in particular caſes the rules we have laid down, as may at firſt view be ſuppoſed.

The degree of attention required to find out a talent for any ſpecies of Compoſition depends partly upon that branch of the art to which the mind hath received a bias, and partly upon the meaſure in which this bias is obſerved to prevail. With regard to the particular kind of Compoſition, it muſt be obvious, that in whatever inſtance the talents requiſite to form a poet or an orator take place, theſe

will

will make ſo ſtriking an appearance as to command obſervation, even ſuppoſing the parent to be remiſs in his attention to a circumſtance of this nature from indolence, or inattentive from avocation. Either of theſe will fall ſo early into his natural courſe as to leave no queſtion by what ſpirit he is animated. It is a matter of no conſequence whether the one character is, or is not miſtaken for the other in the ſeaſon of ſport and paſtime. It is ſufficient that we know what may eaſily be aſcertained, that the mind is diſtinguiſhed by a large proportion of imagination. When this diſcovery therefore is once made, by the firſt eſſays of any kind which he throws out in the firſt ſtages of life, it cannot ſurely be difficult (ſuppoſing the man to whoſe care ſuch a perſon is entruſted, diſqualified for the taſk of ſuperintending his education) to find men of taſte, and of diſcernment in this reſpect, who will lead him into that courſe of ſtudy which may be favourable to the improvement of the inferior faculty.—Again, when the mind is obſerved to have acquired from nature a

more didactic and philoſophical character, it requires not certainly either an extenſive ſhare of penetration to diſcern in that caſe that *invention* is not the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic, nor any uncommon degree of judgment when this is known to engage a man in ſuch purſuits as tend to open and enlarge his imagination. In either caſe it is only requiſite that the ſame attention which is employed to teach a young perſon the ſyntax of a language, a circumſtance of no great conſequence as to intellectual culture, ſhould be applied either to the faculty of invention, or of ratiocination.

2. The other part of the objection which regards the *utility* of the method we have attempted to recommend, admitting it to be carried into execution, ſhould it be ſeriouſly propoſed, will be found upon enquiry to proceed from a very defective acquaintance with the powers of the human mind. That theſe, conſidered in general, are ſuſceptible of the higheſt improvement, is a truth not only univerſally acknowledged by the teſtimony of mankind, but the whole

whole ſyſtem of education adopted among every cultivated people proceeds upon it as an eſtabliſhed and irrefragable maxim. Thus as elegant manners, and an exterior poliſh of the moſt agreeable nature is acquired by living in a court, and by frequenting what is called *good company*; ſo wiſdom, circumſpection, courage, benevolence, the qualities of the heart as well as theſe of the head, are found to depend in an eminent degree upon the firſt principles that are implanted in early youth; as their exertion upon particular occaſions is directed by experience. That the time of earlieſt youth likewiſe is neceſſary in a particular manner for the accompliſhment of theſe purpoſes is evident, not merely from what reaſon ſuggeſts to us, but is confirmed by our obſerving univerſally that when this ſeaſon, ſo peculiarly appropriated to improvement, is permitted to paſs over without being properly employed, the mind acquires gradually a ſettled character, and its habits, whether good or bad, become ſo firmly rooted as never afterwards to be thoroughly eradicated.

If then we find by experience that the whole powers of the human mind taken together, are not only ſuſceptible of culture, but are even moulded into a new form by the infuſion of ſuch principles as are calculated to ripen and unfold them;—is it not obvious, that the ſame attention which is beſtowed on all, directed to ſtrengthen that faculty which appears to be weakeſt, will probably be ſucceſsful when it is applied with judgment, and when the *criſis* is happily fixed upon, at which aſſiſtance is indiſpenſably neceſſary to bring the original ſeeds to maturity?—Should this reaſoning be judged concluſive, no objection can lie either againſt the *utility* of the plan we have laid down in the preſent ſection, or the poſſibility in any inſtance of carrying it completely into execution. How far we have ſucceeded in our attempt to aſcertain the particular means by whoſe uſe either judgment or imagination may be invigorated, the judicious reader muſt be left to determine.

We cannot conclude this important branch of our ſubject until we have made

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one remark, which appears naturally to ariſe from the preceding obſervations. It is the impropriety of the method commonly taken to improve the mind when it is juſt beginning to ſurvey and to diſcriminate objects. In the ſtages of infancy and childhood the care of a parent is very juſtly employed to ſupply the body with proper nouriſhment, and to render the conſtitution hardy and durable. It is chimerical to ſuppoſe that the mind in this helpleſs ſtate can receive improvement of any conſequence. As ſoon however as it begins to diſtinguiſh and compare ideas, the attention of thoſe employed in the work of education appears (uſually at leaſt) to be occupied by circumſtances *wholly foreign* to the principal end, if not in a great meaſure tending to obſtruct it. The boy, as ſoon as the natural baſhfulneſs and timidity (ſo peculiar to this ſeaſon, and ſo characteriſtical of genius) is bruſhed off by reproof and example, is taught to prattle over a few words with a certain air of aſſurance, which gains him the reputation of promiſing parts; and in the ſtudy of

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his native language, if his ſpelling and pronounciation is accurate, it is conſidered as a matter of no great conſequence whether he underſtands the ſentiments, allowing that theſe are adapted to his capacity, or whether they are ſuch as he cannot poſſibly comprehend. The bias given to his mind by nature is ſo far from being attended to, that ſhould imagination happen to take the lead in it, the keenneſs and extravagance that uſually characteriſe it are contemplated as the criteria of uncommon genius, and are encouraged to exert themſelves to the utmoſt. When he comes forward a little further, his intellectuals ſuppoſed to be in a ſtate of almoſt total quieſcence, while his body is advancing ſpeedily in its growth, ſome years of the greateſt importance are permitted to elapſe while he is learning the grammatical part of a language, which had it been deferred a little longer he muſt in half the time have thoroughly underſtood, and his mind during this period receives no real improvement from his preceptors of any kind whatever. The ſtudy of the ſciences immediately

mediately ſucceeds; and having got ſome general knowledge of the branches of philoſophy, his literary education is judged to be accompliſhed, and he is turned over to his own direction. The amuſements in the mean time of his vacant hours in which, by the indulgence of his prevailing bias he undoes whatever may be inculcated at other ſeaſons, are paſſed over without notice.

By purſuing in this manner the ſame track indiſcriminately with all, a ſyſtem of education is adopted, by which, contrary to the teſtimony of univerſal experience, all men whatever in point of capacity are put upon a level. A man, perhaps eminently qualified for active, but no way fitted for contemplative life, is yet compelled to embrace the latter in which his talents are wholly miſapplied; as on the contrary, a man of genius (taking the word in its uſual acceptation) hurried into the tumult of buſineſs, finds himſelf engaged in enterpriſes which he cannot bring to any concluſion; and his abilities are loſt to the public and to himſelf by being directed

rected to improper objects. Admitting, however, that ſuch a man may find (as ſometimes no doubt is the caſe) that his talents have not been miſtaken; yet, from the remarks already made, it muſt be eaſy to obſerve, even in this caſe, the conſequence ariſing from an early and unlimited indulgence of the *ruling* faculty acquiring falſe ideas, and gaining an habit of carrying theſe into exerciſe, in conſequence of an original neglect whoſe effects cannot afterwards be corrected.

Some readers, I am aware, who may admit the truth of theſe obſervations, will yet exclaim that there is hardly any practicable remedy for the evil here complained of. "In order to rectify it (they "will ſay) there muſt be an end of all "public ſeminaries, in which the maſters "would find it an arduous taſk indeed, to "diſtinguiſh, amidſt an indiſcriminate num-"ber of ſcholars, the peculiar character of "any ſingle perſon ſo exactly as to pur-"ſue a particular method with him, while "their attention is ſucceſſively employed "to gratify many wants, and to explore

"many

" many characters among thoſe committed " to their charge."—But a little recollection will ſuggeſt the anſwer to this objection.—Though there is no individual, however weak his intellectual powers, who would not be benefited by ſuch a ſcheme as we have attempted to ſketch out in this ſection, ſteadily carried into execution, and judiciouſly applied to the propenſity of his mind;—yet in common caſes, when no *peculiar* and *diſcriminating* quality makes its appearance, the attention here recommended is not neceſſary. A man of ordinary parts fitted perhaps to go through life with approbation, but diſcovering no bias to any branch of the art which we here treat of, might indeed receive advantage by having the powers of his mind properly balanced by an happy education, to whatever objects theſe might afterwards be directed; but with regard to Compoſition, the neglect of that method which we have propoſed as moſt eligible, could produce no conſiderable detriment. Art may indeed *poliſh* and *improve upon* the materials of nature, but cannot *create* theſe

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where they ſubſiſt not originally. Thus to communicate an idea of what conſtitutes beauty, either in painting or poetry, to a man who is deprived of that internal ſenſe by which it is perceived, would be an attempt as ineffectual as to make a blind man a judge of colours, or to entertain the deaf with a concert of muſic. In inſtances, on the other hand, which fall out but rarely of thoſe who diſcover an early propenſity to ſome ſpecies of Compoſition, we have already ſhown that it is a matter of no great difficulty either to find out the weak ſide of the character, or to adopt a plan of education calculated to adjuſt, and to maintain the balance of the intellectual powers.

But that we may ſet this matter wholly on a proper footing, let us only take for granted what will ſurely be allowed, that men of this claſs are qualified to make quicker progreſs than others in the uſual literary departments; and it will only be neceſſary to defer the time when they begin to acquire the rudiments of a language till a little later than ordinary, in order to

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accompliſh the purpoſe we have mentioned. The parent, or tutor, taking advantage of the criſis at which the mind becomes capable of improvement, will find nothing further requiſite than to carry on in the mean time the plan laid down in this eſſay, or what more adapted can be ſubſtituted in its room, till by habituating his pupil to form ideas of correct and maſterly Compoſition he gains ſome knowledge of excellence in the art. By this method, when he comes afterwards to read the performances of claſſical writers in a foreign language, he will be able without the aſſiſtance of his maſter to judge for himſelf of their peculiar characters; and having the foundation once laid by others, will by the ſtrength of his own reflection and experience erect a proportioned and durable ſuperſtructure.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.